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VERNON, JAMES

LETTERS ILLUSTRATIN
OF THE REISN OF
WILLIAM III

VOLUME 2.

17. NOV. 1973

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LETTERS

ILLUSTRATIVE OF

THE REIGN OF WILLIAM III.

VOL. II.

The Right Honble Charles Talbot,

DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

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LETTERS

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE

REIGN OF WILLIAM III.

FROM 1696 TO 1708.

ADDRESSED TO

THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY,

BY

JAMES VERNON, Esq.

SECRETARY OF STATE.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINALS.

EDITED BY

G. P. R. JAMES, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH," "RICHELIEU," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES,

VOL. II.

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LETTERS

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE

REIGN OF WILLIAM III.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Feb. 8, 1697-8.

I HAVE the honour of your Grace's letter of the 5th, and am sorry Colonel Brudenell is disappointed of one of his hopes, which was going to Ireland, for Mr. Blathwayt tells me this day the five regiments of foot ordered thither are Webb, How, Stanley, Steward, and Ingoldsby, besides which there are the regiments of horse of Levison and Langton. I am afraid there is not much to expect among the marines; the King would fain have double the number established, to make up 6,000 men.

If it could be carried, I suppose they would be all formed out of the old regiments; people's pulse have been felt upon it, but there is no prospect of attaining it; on the contrary, they say the attempt will endanger the keeping the regiments that are in being, for whose usefulness something may be said,

if it be not overturned by giving a jealousy that more troops are laboured to be kept up than they intended, by calling them only by another name.

The backwardness some gentlemen have shewn to espouse this matter warmly, though it arises from their judgment and the nature of the thing, yet it is interpreted to be a greater regard to themselves than the public concerns, and that the union and strength of the party appears in nothing so much as in personal respects and a care one for another. I have spoken with Mr. Smith, who I find does not disguise his sentiments, that he is so far from consenting to an accommodation with Lord Sunderland, that he declares he will have nothing to do with public business, whenever he comes to be concerned in it. I believe his firmness has made Mr. Montagu much cooler in the thoughts of it; so that I began to think it impracticable. I know not what your Grace's influence might be upon your coming up, if you thought fit to meddle in it.

The King opens himself more and more as to his desire of seeing you here, when you shall think it convenient, and is pleased I should now mention it to you, not to press your coming up immediately, but that you would have it in your thoughts to prepare for the journey when you are in a condition to undertake it. I find it is likewise the opinion of all your friends that you should appear here some time in the session; if it were but for suppressing the vanity, and insulting of some very few malicious

men, who can never have it in their power to make you the least uneasy. I am confident you will be freed from impertinence, but withal, I believe you will find a knotty piece of work to unravel, as our matters are intricate; those who don't like to hear of Lord Sunderland's return, perhaps will not have it in their power to hinder it, and I know not what alterations that may produce.

The Duke of St. Alban's came hither last Saturday; he left Paris the Monday before. He brought letters from my Lord Portland, who finds himself extremely caressed, but no opportunities are given him to talk of business, and he sees no dispositions that this frankness will continue, when it comes to effects. They are putting out fifty men-of-war for the ocean, and have given notice of it in Holland, that they should not be alarmed at it, since it is with no design to disturb the peace.

Lord Portland saw at Versailles, the last time he was there, Lord Middleton and Lord Melfort, which was no very agreeable sight to him.

As for our parliament views, yesterday's votes explain themselves, and to-day the giving the land-tax was proposed, and chiefly managed by Harley, Musgrave, and that party; they were stiff in their point for proceeding to disband the army, without staying for all the quantums, and to have the whole scheme of this year's taxes laid before them at once. I believe there is another point they will be courtly in, which is the civil list; and as for the last year's

deficiencies, they will go near to let them shift as they can, though by the acts of last session they are to take place on the first aids; they will not shew much concern for the credit of exchequer bills, considering who is their parent that brought them into the world. Your Grace will judge what his sort of management is tending to, and whether an irreconcileable humour is the way to stop the progress of it.

We have a young fellow brought up from Canterbury, under the notion of Davis the assassi*nate*,* who never was heard of, and I believe never will be. This is one David Jolly, a young rakeall, who has been a soldier in France and Ireland. Harris, the evidence, remembers he left him in France when he came over, and acquits him from the accusation; however I can't part with him. The landlord where he lay at Canterbury having deposed he owned he was a proclamation man, he said he was made drunk with brandy, and remembered nothing that passed. He was going away in obedience to the Act of Parliament, if he had not been thus stopped. I think that would have been the best way to be rid of him.

My Lord Paget is sending us such another. I suppose Mr. Yard gives your Grace an account that Evans is shipped, and expected every day in the river.

My Lord Chancellor has been most troubled with a sore throat; he does not yet stir out. The Lords would have examined my Lord Chief Justice and the rest of the Judges of the King's Bench, at a

* So written.

committee upon the judgment they gave in the case of Lord Banbury. But they excused answering it there, as not thinking themselves obliged to give the reasons for their judgment but in court, or when the cause comes before the Lords by writ of error; this, they say, is ill taken, and will be reported to-morrow. If my Lord Chief Justice be sent to the Tower, as some threaten, it is like to embroil the two houses.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 10, 1697-8.

I acquainted your Grace in my last, what I thought was the situation of our affairs, and what little prospect there was of an accommodation, unless you were so happy as to effect it.

I don't believe it ever can be upon the terms that were once thought of. The King, perhaps, may look upon that as too like a design to engross him, which he will very hardly give way to, and your Grace knows best what others will think of a mixture of different interests, especially after they have borne the shock, and find themselves the prevailing side, notwithstanding the confederated opposition against them.

My Lord Chancellor is not yet come abroad, his sore throat being still troublesome, so that we have had no Council this week of either kind. It would

not have been disappointed to-night, but that the House of Lords sat till near six upon the business of my Lord Chief Justice and Judge Eyre, who kept to their point not to inform the House, any more than they did the Committee, of the reasons for their judgment in the Earl of Banbury's case, but stood upon it, that they were at liberty not to answer in a matter that he charged upon them, nobody being bound to accuse himself, or furnish an accusation to his prejudice. If the judgments they gave, shewed a weakness in them, it might be a reason to the King for displacing them; or if they were guilty of corruption, there was another way of providing against them, and if their judgments were disliked, they might be reversed by writ of error. But they could not submit to be schooled and catechised for all that they delivered upon the bench, where they were entrusted with the execution of the laws, and the dispensing of justice, and acted upon their oaths. It was once or twice moved that they should withdraw, but the question was diverted, and at last it was carried to adjourn the debate, and the House till Monday. It is uncertain yet what the event will be, though it is supposed the matter can't be carried to extremity, though my Lord Normanby and Lord Rochester would push it. All concluded if they should be sent to the Tower, it must end the sessions too, since the House of Commons would not bear it.

The Committee this day settled the quantum of

what was in arrear for subsidies to foreign princes, amounting to above 400,000*l.*, which was said to arise from the aids falling short. Two of them were questioned, whether they should be allowed, more I think for opposition sake than any other reason. It being a thin committee, it was carried but by one to allow what was demanded for the Bishop of Munster, there being 61 against 62. It was disputed likewise, whether 50,000*l.* should be allowed the Danes, in pursuance of a treaty made with them about fifteen months since, whereby they oblige themselves to forbear any commerce with France, or to allow the French privateers the liberty of their ports, unless stress of weather; and if they bring in any prize, it shall be instantly released, with other agreements for preserving peace in the northern parts, and strengthening the alliance even beyond the peace. This was excepted against, as a matter they had never been acquainted with, but it was carried by 101 against 69.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 12, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 9th, and must be always sensible of your favours; you would ease me of what you think may be a trouble, but I can never find any thing in whatever I can do for your service.

While some persons are under these prepossessions as to my Lord Sunderland, it is fit the matter should rest a little, that the case may be wrought by time, and an able hand.

We have had a report here that my Lord Wharton, who went out of town the last week, would make your Grace a visit before he came up again. The King has heard of it, and was in some apprehension lest he might divert your Grace from coming to town. I don't know why it should be suspected, since I think my Lord Wharton himself, as well as the rest of your friends, seems very desirous of seeing you here, and I take it to be of great concern to that whole interest, as well as to the publick, that things be brought to a greater certainty, and it may be known who are, and who are to be, together.

It is of more consequence than people perhaps imagine, and I believe the last resolutions will wait for your Grace's coming up, if it be not too long deferred. I don't know but the present intentions are that my Lord Wharton should not succeed as Secretary of State, but there is nothing that may not be altered for attaining a greater good, and for that consideration my Lord Chancellor, whom I saw yesterday, does not make any great doubt but Mr. Smith may be brought to think more favourably of a reconciliation, when it is once resolved to labour in it, and that the usefulness of it shall appear to outweigh the prejudices against it, which must be the result of a joint deliberation.

Now I have mentioned my Lord Chancellor, I ought to acquaint your Grace that he is very much mended; he has been abroad this day to take the air, as cold as it is, and within a day or two, I hope he will fall to business.

We had yesterday letters from my Lord Portland, which were sent by an express who came from Paris on Tuesday last. Your Grace will see in the inclosed news from Paris, what they say as part of my Lord Portland's errand, in relation to the removal of King James. I believe he has touched upon that string in his private audiences, but I don't hear he has had any satisfactory answer to it.

There has been little remarkable in the House of Commons these two days. Yesterday, upon the report from the Committee, we had the debate over again, whether the subsidy were due to the Danes by virtue of the treaty in December, 1696. Mr. Molesworth both days shewed his resentment against the Danes, and did it so waspishly, that it was not much to their advantage. Mr. Pelham said he could not understand from any body else, why things should not be paid, but this gentleman gave the reason for it, because they were Jacobites; however, he was for doing justice to every body.

The bill for restraining Ireland from the woollen manufacture was this day committed; the arguments of Lord Coningsby, Mr. Methuen, and Mr. Molesworth, making no impressions against it. The bill for vacating the grant of Irish forfeitures, was

read the second time and committed, and the three other bills about grants were read the first time.

The Dowager Countess of Clancarty died this morning; she contracted her sickness by a deep melancholy for the condition of her son and family.

I writ the purport of this letter in my Lord Chief Justice's Chamber, waiting for his return from Westminster Hall, to speak with him about the unlucky business that is to come on again upon Monday. He thinks himself in the right not to satisfy the Lords in the reasons for his judgments, and they expected to be treated with more deference. I understand my Lord Lonsdale was as violent against him as either Lord Rochester or Lord Normanby; he is very indifferent what resolutions they take, and thinks he has been so ill-used already, that he is weary of the place.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 14, 1697-8.

I have the honour of your Graces's letter of the 12th, which I have read to the King, who was pleased to find your Grace in so good a disposition to come up, which he was in some doubts of before, upon the insinuation I mentioned, as if my Lord Wharton would rather divert you from it. He still thinks my Lord Wharton's inclination to a reconciliation will depend upon his being Secretary or

not. I may tell your Grace my thoughts with all freedom. I believe his Majesty would be willing to be at liberty in that case, but I think too he would not withstand it, if your Grace and Lord Sunderland should advise it, and that it were a thing necessary to be done for removing of jealousies, and carrying on the public business more steadily. I don't see we have so fair a prospect of the French sincerity, that any new measures may be ventured upon, but those which have stood firm for the interests of this government will be as necessary for the support of it as ever, and this may be no ill time to rivet them in. His Majesty would be glad to see your Grace about the beginning of next month; I asked him whether it might not be convenient you should wait on him first at Windsor, whither he thinks sometimes of going as soon as the weather is reasonable. He liked that well enough, but withal thought it necessary you should come to town, for the conveniency of discoursing with your friends, and removing any rats that may be in the way. I believe there are but few who will not acquiesce in what your Grace shall judge our circumstances may require, and those too will be mollified, when they are apprised of what shall be agreed on. Every body being satisfied that your Grace will propose nothing, but what you judge safest and most conducing to the general good.

I don't know it will be necessary your Grace should make any long stay here; when you have set

the wheels ageing you may retire again, if the concerns of your health require it. And I believe you need not wait on the King again till he goes to Newmarket, which will be in April; but he depends upon seeing you some time before he goes thither. Your Grace will consider whether it be best my Lord Sunderland should meet you at Windsor or elsewhere: perhaps it may be requisite you should be satisfied what you would or can incline the King before you enter into discourses with other people.

Sir James Forbes tells me that he hears an exchange is negotiating: that my Lord Marlborough should be Chamberlain, and your Grace Governor to the Duke of Gloucester, but I know nothing of it otherwise; but I observe my Lord Marlborough is frequently with the King, and therefore I hope they are well together.

I have acquainted my Lord Orford with your Grace's intention of coming up (who is very glad of it), and shall do the like to my Lord Chancellor tomorrow. This is the first day he has ventured abroad, and it is not a very inviting one.

I understand from my Lord Ranelagh that more regiments are to be sent into Ireland, and Colonel Brudenell is one of them; there will be but two regiments of the old establishment kept up, which are Hanmer and Gustavus Hamilton. I am glad both the Colonels your Grace shewed a concern for are preserved.

I have signified to my Lord Manchester that the King would have him think of returning within a convenient time after his audience, as looking upon any long stay there to be an unnecessary expense. And as to Mr. Stanion's being left President, the King has no exception to it, but that he thinks one residing there with a character useless, and not worth the charge. If my Lord Manchester, as I writ him word, will shew him the contrary, perhaps he may alter his opinion.

The Evans my Lord Paget is sending home is not yet arrived, and when he comes I know not what we have to say to him. The Evans that was to be Lieutenant to Sir John Friend,* for which we had only Brice Blair's word, is at Greenwich.

Mr. Holland, who made oath at Constantinople against Evans, and was sent home by my Lord Paget, binding him in a recognizance, is still here, and shall be confronted with the other when he comes.

My Lord Chandos's son comes to me this evening, to tell me from his father that Sir James Rushout is very ill, and like to die, in which case his Lordship desires to be recommended to succeed him. I don't know Sir James is in that condition; I heard his Lady was dying, but if any such thing should happen, I shall not presume to be recommending in your province.

* One of the leaders of the conspiracy for William's assassination.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Feb. 17, 1697-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 14th. It is some time since that I heard of Fisher and Charlton's beginning to stir, and the reason why I did not acquaint your Grace with it immediately was, because your friends thought it unnecessary, and that it might give you some uneasiness, though this matter does in no part concern you, and Fisher told me as much, but now he has brought it home to you. I send your Grace a copy of the account I gave of this matter to my Lord Portland, who if any body might be affected with it, and I find Colt has since told my Lord Chancellor that if this story were told he would be mentioned in it, though he knows no reason for it, nor can his Lordship recollect any occasion he gave them, since he was unacquainted with what Fisher might have discovered to my Lord Portland.

Charlton has writ to me since that he might have an audience, but the King will not hear of it, till he be first informed in writing what it tends to, and they declining to give him that satisfaction, I conclude they have nothing material to say, and by their taking this way of whispers they are destitute of matter and encouragement to speak openly. Though I gave Fisher a cold answer as to the making his pension equal to Porter's, yet I writ to the Treasury about it, that he may not have a real cavil.

I know not what my Lord Ashley's party is, or how far they have authorised him to make any proposal in their names, but I see there is but one sort of men the King can with safety depend upon, and many factions and interests are concurring to divide and pull them to pieces if they can, which there was a remarkable instance of yesterday in the attempt upon Mr. Montague,* against whom the design has long been forming, but it was carried so secretly, that he did not know what was driven at till yesterday morning, and there could not be a greater disappointment given them, or any thing happen more to his advantage.

What my Lord Wharton tells your Grace in relation to Lord Sunderland can hardly be gainsaid. I think there is no man in England so much exposed as he is to have his name tossed about in parliament, and when it happens he will never be so well defended as Mr. Montague was yesterday. But these are risks he must run, if he can't live from court, or the King will not be without him; he can endanger no one but himself, and will rather be a screen to others.

If a party can establish themselves by his means, and thereby be more serviceable to their country, I

* The enemies of Montague discovered that Montague was possessed of a grant from the crown, which was held in trust for him by a Mr. Railton, and laying their plans to take him unawares, the attack was made, and it was moved that he should withdraw from the house. To the surprise, however, of the Opposition, the motion was negatived by a vast majority, and, on the contrary, a resolution was put and carried that Montague richly deserved the King's favour.

don't know what hazard they run by laying hold of the opportunity: perhaps the neglect of it may render themselves more uneasy, and their country more unsafe.

My Lord Chancellor, whom I waited on yesterday morning, thinks it inconvenient to put off an accommodation to the end of the session. That is a good way off, and moles are working under ground in the meantime, and if a reconciliation be desperate it may provoke new measures. He thinks if the resolutions are deferred till towards the end of the parliament, they may still be kept back till the beginning of the next, and may be help to make the next worse than it would be. But as your Grace is soon expected, I hope every thing will be properly timed.

I have not heard of late that my Lord Sunderland has writ any thing about these matters: I suppose it was in expectation of your arrival, I would not think he did it to wait for yesterday's event.* Whoever built upon it is miserably disappointed. I hear if they had broke in upon Mr. Montague, my Lord Chancellor would have been the next for sealing and accepting of grants. But if any body wants to know which side is the strongest, fair proof is given of it.

Great notice is taken that Lords Nottingham, Weymouth, Ferrers, and some others, have been in close whispers of late. We shall soon see whether it be any new thing they are aiming at.

My Lord Chancellor had an account some time

* The attack upon Montague.

since of Handford the assassinate, lodging at his brother's; but we knew not where to find him. If one will come up that can do it for us, it may be of use, especially if he would join with Harris to hang Counter,* and three or four more of his comrades that lie in Newgate for want of evidence.

Mr. Prior is less sanguine in his letter to me than it seems he was to Mr. Yard. I don't know what my Lord Portland will obtain hereafter, but at present he finds no disposition in the French Court to King James's removal, and as to the assassinates now in France, the King wants to be better informed of that matter, before he can withdraw his protection from them. We shall therefore send over an abstract of the depositions as far as they are concerned.

Poor Sir James Rushout died yesterday: pretenders appear already for the succession. My Lord Chandos came to the office yesterday morning, when I told him it was in your Grace's province, and there the application must be made.

Paul Foley gives me a strange reason for preferring him, saying he is the head of the Jacobites in Herefordshire, and if he were removed, they would moulder away. He speaks of his son as one otherwise inclined, that would be knight of the shire next choice, but if he shall vote as his son does, the Jacobites would have another head of the same family.

* One of those confined with Bernardi and others without trial by a most infamous prostitution of parliamentary power.

My Lord Dursley writes to your Grace about the same business. I saw him speaking to the King this evening, and he tells me the King is inclined to send him to Constantinople. Mr. Molesworth has made broad signs that he may be sent thither, and I remember when Sir James Rushout was chosen, Sir Richard Onslow then expressed a desire of that embassy. I name all I know that you may consider whom you would recommend.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Feb. 22, 1697-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 19th, and have read to his Majesty that part which mentions your coming up, who approves entirely of all you propose, that the design of your coming up should not be thought to be on Lord Sunderland's account, and that he should not be here at the same time. The King is very desirous to see you first at Windsor, and if it could be before you have had any other visits. While these easterly winds last, he neither thinks of going to Windsor, nor would he have you venture on a journey: when he thinks of being at Windsor, your Grace shall have timely notice of it, that you may come thither accordingly.

We are in a terrible conflict of parties. The Treasury have had a general attack made upon them to-day, and they have stood their ground with the

same success, only Mr. Pelham has shewn, that he is in ill intelligence with his brethren, and took an occasion to let it be known in an angry manner. What differences he has had with them at the Board I don't know, but this may put things at a farther distance from an accommodation, he being looked upon as under my Lord Sunderland's guidance. Mr. Methuen and Mr. Molesworth both voted for Mr. Montague; the last time Mr. Methuen rose up to speak, but was prevented. My Lord Spencer shewed a great deal of warmth for Mr. Montague, and nobody in the House is more violent against Duncombe. It will be endeavoured to improve this day's debate to Duncombe's advantage, since it was not unlawful for receivers to make payments in exchequer bills, and if all helps fail in the House of Commons, they hope the Lords will throw out the bill at the first reading,* as entrenching upon their judicature, by the Commons letting themselves into a share of it, when the case does not require so extraordinary a remedy. If this should happen, I don't know how such a breach could be made up. I don't doubt, but some would be willing to blow the coals to the dissolution of this parliament.

When Fisher comes he shall know your Grace has endeavoured to procure him an audience, but I question whether he will have it, till he has complied with the conditions.

* This was a bill to punish Duncombe and others for various criminal transactions regarding exchequer bills.

My Lord Dursley presses his point of going to Constantinople, and thinks there is the more haste for it, since the Turkey Company have met and intend to know the King's pleasure, whether he will give them leave to choose an ambassador.

My Lord Chancellor came to the Cabinet Council on Sunday, but I hear he finds himself a little out of order again to-day.

Vice-Admiral Aylmer was then brought to kiss the King's hand for the command of the Mediterranean squadron, which they say will be ready in three weeks or a month.

I have a letter from Mr. Prior to-night of the 18th, he refers only to another he should send by express, which I perceive is to give an account of a third private audience my Lord Portland has had.

Mr. Stower's warrant and bill is signed for his licence to come over.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 10*, 1698.

I have received this day the honour of your Grace's letters of the 9th and 10th. I was afraid it would be taken notice of how very negligent some are in the public concerns, and those particularly

* This letter, as well as the four that follow, was dated A.D. 1697; but from the date of the facts to which they refer, I have dated them a year later, the proof of thus being the right date existing in themselves beyond all question.

whose attendance the King has a right to expect. I wish it don't create an opinion, that it is indifferent what party is employed, and one is no more to be depended upon than the other, and that offices and employments will cast the balance either way.

I find a corner that has not much voted for supplies, are very pressing to have the four days in the week totally set apart for ways and means. It is a good opportunity for them to make their court in, if they have hearts to do it. I believe they will come in to make money of the East India trade, and 600,000*l.* may be raised upon it, as much as will clear the Excise, and perhaps they will be looked upon as ill courtiers that shall oppose it.

While your Grace is attending on the King, nobody can expect that you should leave him. We have some friends that will not leave their dinner for a more public concern.

I shall get the letter for the Emperor ready by to-morrow. I would have seen the Count d'Aversberg to-day, had it not been for a visit of the Swedish Ambassador, who desires his Majesty will favour him with a private audience, since he can't be very soon ready for his entry.

Monsieur Gersdoff was with me yesterday, who has credentials from the King of Poland. I perceive his ordinary residence is to be in Holland, and he is ordered to come hither from time to time. He demands a private audience only.

I send enclosed a penny post letter for the King,

which he allows should be opened. I suppose this is from Mrs. Hill, the mad lady, who, if she is to be heard, would have nothing to say but about Mr. Payton.

I think we have now done with Duncombe,* unless the Lords bring him into conferences for neglecting the fine, and the promise to stick close to the public business. To-morrow we go on to the third bill; the point in that to be fixed is, that each county be charged with their proportion, provided they raise it, let them lay it how they will.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 15†, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of this day, and am sorry you should have the trouble of writing so long a letter, in so much pain as I hear you were in. It is some comfort, however, to understand that the spitting of blood abates, and I hope the anguish of your knee will do so too, that you may see his Majesty at Windsor or otherwise.

* Charles Duncombe, Esq., stated by Evelyn, to have been "not long since a mean goldsmith, but now a great banker. He purchased Helmsley, in Yorkshire, once the property of the Duke of Buckingham, and drew upon himself the well known lines of Pope:

"And Helmsley, once proud Buckingham's delight,
Slides to a scrivener or city knight."

† This letter was wrongly placed and dated, in the copy of the correspondence, being inserted with the letters of 1697, and so dated. I have restored it to its right date, which was easily fixed by the business of Duncombe.

I don't think any thing can prevent his coming to Woburne.

I shall wait on the King to-morrow, and let him know how you find yourself, and what assurances you desire of a total retreat; but I don't expect his Majesty should give me any answer as to that part. I imagine he will not be very ready to give your Grace that satisfaction, in hopes you will not insist upon it, when you grow better, and your pain is over.

Your Grace gives me great encouragement to hold on in my appointment; but I can be no more persuaded of my qualifications, than your Grace believes you have health for it.

I cannot but be concerned that his Majesty should not have explained himself a little more to your Grace, which I am afraid will have an ill influence upon our affairs depending in parliament.

People have been big with an expectation of what kind a settlement we should come to, and if that be blasted, I know not how business will go on. I meet with discourses, as if it would be but slowly, unless some greater encouragement were given. I cannot tell but the rejecting of Duncombe's bill this day by the Lords, with such a circumstance as the immediately discharging him out of prison may heighten resentments, when people were out of humour before. I believe it will not be well taken, that Lord Romney and Lord Albemarle went away.

If the latter thought it sufficient he had appointed a proxy, those were all laid aside.

Lord Burlington voted against the bill, and I hear Lord Dorset did the like.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 16, 1698.

I have just now received the honour of your Grace's letter of this day. You find, no doubt, great uneasiness with the pains that seize you from one place to another; but your friends are less alarmed at this than your other illness. If it prove a gout, that has been an old companion of men of business.

Your Grace will not misinterpret it, if your friends oppose as long as they can your resolutions of retiring. They see a cloud impending over the state which they think you can only disperse. I think all agree you should be eased from the laborious part, and give them your assistance only at your own conveniency, or at a distance.

I laid before the King this morning what your Grace proposed of holding the Seals till the end of the session, provided you could be assured of being then discharged without passing from one office to another. His Majesty is willing to free you from the Seals sooner, on condition you will accept the Chamberlain's Staff, which he does not expect should

be a tie upon you, or oblige you to any attendance till you find your health thoroughly established.

I find the King thinks it of great use to his service, that it should not be thought you had left it, and your friends will think they have lost their best hold at Court, when they see you wind yourself out of it, and *how** business can go on under coldnesses and distrust.

You having allowed me so much freedom in writing to you, you will give me leave to use it so far as to acquaint you, my imagination is, your Grace would not withstand the King's persuasions, and your friends' desires, as to your accepting this new employment, if you were satisfied who should succeed you, and how far that would tend to a settlement.

If it were intended you should have an office for the name of it, and at the same time there should be other dispositions of places that were not of a piece with it, this would look like an artifice, that you are incapable of. I can't suspect an office should be put upon you only to give a colour to such a change.

The King told me he thought of being at Windsor to-morrow in the evening, and I was directed to give my Lord Chancellor notice he would speak with him in the morning. It is not to be avoided, but if you be not well enough to remove to Windsor, the King will come to you at Woburne. What

* So written, but probably by mistake, instead of *no*.

passed yesterday in the House of Lords,* must produce speedy resolutions.

The House of Commons have appointed a Committee to inspect the Lords' journals in relation to the proceedings against Duncombe, and particularly his discharge. The Lords, I hear, pretend he was their prisoner from the time they had sent for him; and the Commons intend to be satisfied how the Governor of the Tower came to carry up their prisoner without their knowledge or consent; so that my Lord Lucas at least will have a pretty time between the two Houses.†

The King is apprehensive, and not without reason, that the heats will be carried very high, and give great obstruction to business. The Commons, I perceive, think themselves obliged to assert their rights, and will‡ them against the Lords, and rip up the usage of my Lord Chief Justice, and their treading the laws under foot in the manner of their judicature, for which they will instance the setting aside a judgment of the King's Bench in the case of Lord Montague's witnesses, and the rejecting, this day, a decree of my Lord Chancellor's upon Cary's estate, in which they declare that my Lord Abing-

* In regard to Duncombe.

† Duncombe had been committed to the Tower by the Commons and is said to have confessed the crime of which he was accused, upon which he was expelled the House, and a Bill of Pains and Penalties brought in. The bill, however, was rejected by the Lords, and Duncombe ordered to be set at liberty, in consequence of which these serious disputes took place between the two Houses.

‡ Something omitted in the MS.

don's son, who married Cary's niece, ought to be relieved, and they say they will give the estate from my Lord Falkland to Mrs. Bertie during her life, which is neither affirming nor reversing the decree.

Some of the Lords give good encouragement to their friends of the House of Commons to retrieve this business one way or another. And I hear there is to be a meeting to-morrow morning at my Lord Wharton's to consider how it is to be carried on.

Sir Rowland Gwyn has made a motion this day, in the House of Commons, and Mr. Colt seconded it, that his Majesty should be addressed, that he will cause a list to be printed of the persons who have leave to stay in England, pursuant to the late act. They pretend to mean no more by it, but to know those who have no leave, that they may be taken up. That I have no exception to, but I must always suspect these gentlemen, and I rather imagine that they have more mind to be finding fault with the licences that have been given. I shall see the use they will make of it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 26, 1698.

I waited on the King at his arrival at Kensington this evening, which was about nine o'clock. I gave him some letters which I had received to-day from Holland, and from my Lord Portland: the latter

were of the 22nd, o.s. Those mention as if the King of Spain was something better. They add, that the King of France has the gout, with the return of his erysipelas.

He is thought to grow very uneasy at the fatigue of business, insomuch that he would be contented to resign Flanders to the Duke of Bavaria, and the territories in Italy to other people, provided he may secure to himself the quiet possession of Spain and the Indies, which would be an ill bargain to him, and yet perhaps it would be accepted of, if we are in no better condition to give our assistance.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 29, 1698.

I have received this evening the honour of your Grace's letter of this day. I am sorry I have no better account to send the King of your Grace's health, which he enquired after this morning, and there being no letters then from you, he hoped it was a sign of your coming up the sooner. I know not now when you can be expected, or whether you will be here, or at Newmarket. My Lord Orford is gone thither this morning, and I suppose the King will be going on Monday. The third bill being in such forwardness as your Grace will see by the inclosed. I hope Mr. Wharton is passed his great danger; he is now very sensible again, the violence

of his distemper having thrown itself on his left arm, which he has no use of at present, but the doctors think that recoverable, when they have nothing else to struggle with.

The French Ambassador had a private audience yesterday. He told Sir Charles Cotterell as he went to Kensington, that since I made a difficulty of visiting him, he should be obliged to take notice of it at his audience, and he was as good as his word. The answer his Majesty made him was, that he was sure there was no other practice; but the Secretary received the first visit since he has been in England, and he understood it was according to the ancient usage. He was but a very little while with the King, there passed only general compliments. I was not there, so I have not yet seen him, unless it were a glimpse of him in his coach, as he was going this day to Kensington.

The King had a great mind to be satisfied what his proofs were, which he would have shewn Sir Charles Cotterell, but he declined seeing them. I sent, therefore, Sir Charles to him on purpose, on Sunday, to get a sight of those papers as from himself, but methinks he has performed it awkwardly. The Ambassador readily called for his strong box, and pulled out a letter of the Ambassador Colbert, which gave an account that immediately upon his arrival, my Lord Arlington sent his compliments, that it was fit he should be left undisturbed the next day to repose himself, but that he would make him

a visit the day following, according to custom. Sir Charles said he was going to take out some other papers of Monsieur Coustin, but Sir Charles was upon a strain of courtesy, and would no longer seem to doubt, but he had such papers as he pretended, and as to Monsieur Barrillon, no mention was made of him either by the one or the other. This information being so lame, I have spoke to my Lord Romney by the King's command; that Monsieur Tallard having already made him a visit or two, he would enter into conversation with him on this subject, and go to the bottom of it, as one that has been Secretary of State, and can vouch for the practice. He thinks of seeing him on Thursday next, and perhaps by that time, or soon after it, we may hear from my Lord Portland, what is said to it, in that Court, and why they expect more should be paid to their Ambassadors, than they allow to others. I don't doubt but Mr. Yard sends your Grace an account of Mr. Stanhope's letter that arrived yesterday. I have it back from the King, but find it contains little more than what he writ to your Grace four days before.

Sir Charles Cotterell tells me the French Ambassador intends to make my Lord Chancellor a visit, and will send to him for an hour. Those in his station are not obliged to grant it; at least, they have a privilege, not to return visits, if they will make use of it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 3, 1698.

I have given his Majesty an account of my waiting on your Grace, and that you would endeavour to be at Newmarket, though it was a very improper journey for you to undertake in such a condition of health.

I said so much on that subject, that I hope your Grace will not be pressed beyond what you think consistent with your preservation.

The King asked whether your Grace said any thing of my Lord Sunderland or Lord Wharton. I answered that your Grace wished the way might be made easy for the return of the former, and that the prejudices taken against him might be removed. He thought he was hardly dealt with in some opinions people had entertained of him, and that nobody was so opposite to him as my Lord Wharton, which his Majesty foresaw would happen, when my Lord Wharton was disappointed as to his going into Ireland. That it would be resented upon my Lord Sunderland, though nobody was so earnest as he was for his being gratified in that particular. I said I thought there was a time, when they two had been very good friends, and I did not know but it might be so again with some management between them. As I am unacquainted with any other way but speaking plain, I thought what was expected in be-

half of my Lord Wharton should either be granted, or that he be kept no longer in amusement.

The King answered he knew nothing of my Lord Wharton desiring to be Secretary, and what he might have heard of it accidentally, was not a good inducement for disposing of places. All that I could infer was, that the King is not so disgusted with the manner of my Lord Sunderland's going away, as not to be willing to have him again, and I believe he can't well bear being without him, if your Grace has not a better stock of health to be near him. I hope you will finally resolve every thing at Newmarket, now you have the trouble of going thither, and I shall think myself miserable if your Grace suffers any thing extraordinary in this journey, since I had the misfortune to bring you the message. But if you ease your mind by it, one way or another, perhaps it may contribute more to your ease, than solitude and thoughtfulness.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 6, 1698.

I long to hear your Grace got thither, (at Newmarket), without encreasing your illness. I hope you will have no more journies put upon you, nor any thing else you do not like. I thought, for quiet sake, you might bear the name of Lord Chamberlain; if the King would be satisfied you should not

do the duty of it, but that the key may lie in your hands, as it does at present in mine.

If that be uneasy to your Grace, and useless to the King, my Lord Chancellor is one of those who is for leaving you entirely at your liberty. I wish people's minds may be otherwise quieted, and that the King's business be put into the hands of such a set of men as will go on with it cheerfully and vigorously. I shall think it at a stand till I see the civil list provided for.

At present we are beating the bush for smaller duties, that we may not appear to stand still.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 7, 1698.

I hope this will find your Grace at Newmarket, and if you have not been disordered with your journey it will be very good news to hear.

Your Grace will have been informed of the French Ambassadors partial discovery, which we have heard no more of since. If I could have found my Lord Romney in time, I would have gone to him again this evening. Instead of discoveries, the Ambassador's head is taken up with his ceremonies. De Bos has been with me just now, to let me know that Monsieur Tallard told him he had newly received a Courier from Paris, by which he was more confirmed that he was in the right in insisting upon the first

visit, and could not depart from it. By what I can understand, he grounds himself chiefly, if not singly upon some extraordinary civility that my Lord Arlington paid to Monsieur Colbert. There is little said now of Barrillon, who came when there were no other Secretaries.

I believe your Grace might have known, or heard of De Bussy, who married my Lord Newbury's mother, and was a Captain in my Lord Macclesfield's regiment, and went away upon the revolution. He is lately come over again, pretending to the benefits of some office in right of his wife. His being here having made a noise, I have taken him into custody; and if the Ambassador gives no greater satisfaction in his discovery, I think it would be the best way to take up a dozen Frenchmen more of those he is most likely to reclaim, and give him that reason for it, that if there be a*—— and he will not tell us who he is, we must secure them all. The letter writ to the Ambassador, says it is from one who has been a prisoner here two years since. I have had Sir William Trumbull's books searched, and can find no entry about Frenchmen; and I do not remember any such, unless it were a fellow that afterwards went and lived at Bromsgrove, having married a woman of that country. I think he writ to your Grace out of some jail. I know not what became of that fellow. I now recollect myself, that his name was Lewis Martin Peau, and he married

* Four words are here unintelligible.

a whore about the Savoy. If it be he, he may be bubbling the Ambassador for ought I know, and is rogue enough in all kinds.

Dr. Barebone died yesterday, they say Dr. Ratcliffe will succeed him.

MR. VERNON, TO THE KING.

April 7, 1698.

Sir Thomas Littleton reported this day the resolutions of the Committee about the duty upon coals. The first of them held a pretty long debate, and the House divided upon it, but it was carried by 144 against 123, then the rest of the resolutions passed without opposition.

Mr. Harley made a motion that Knight and Barton might be bailed, grounding it upon their bills having been passed, and that there might be no dispute with the Lords about them. There would not have been much difficulty in it, if their case had stood alone. But it not having been done to Duncomb, they would not vary from what they did then, lest any advantage might be taken of it, as if they owned they were in the wrong, when they kept Duncomb so long in custody. Besides this motion being made without any petition from the parties, it was deemed irregular and rejected. The militia bill being the business appointed for the day, the Committee sat upon it, and made some progress, but it was no better attended than before.

I received your Majesty's commands in Mr. Yard's letter of yesterday, and went immediately to find out my Lord Romney, but he was gone out, and I have no notice yet that he is returned. It is now so late that he can't well go to the French Ambassador's before to-morrow morning. I saw my Lord in the morning, and he then intended to go to the Ambassador's this afternoon.

I know not whether your Majesty ever heard of one De Bussy, a Frenchman, who married my Lord Newbury's mother, he was afterwards a Captain in my Lord Macclesfield's regiment of Horse, and having been a busy French Papist, he left the kingdom at the revolution, and is now lately come over again, as he says with Mr. Lowman. Great notice has been taken of his being here, and my Lord Romney speaking of it yesterday before my Lord Chancellor, I have taken him up upon suspicion of treason, and he is now in the custody of a messenger. It is thought he may be liable to the late act, for pretending to the profits of an office in right of his wife. It is supposed he is a denizen, but without reason. I think I should be justifiable if I took up all the French Papists now in England, since their Ambassador owns there is an assassinate among them, and does not think fit to declare who he is.

Dr. Barebone, one of our members died yesterday at Osterley Park; they say Dr. Ratcliffe will be chosen in his place, who served with him here before for that place.

I am just come from my Lord Romney, who will be sure to see the Ambassador to-morrow, as early as he can, and then he will call upon me, that we may go together to my Lord Chancellor's before he goes to the House of Lords.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 8, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of yesterday.* It was a great satisfaction to find you were able to perform your journey so well. I hope nobody now will have cause to repent your going thither.

I have communicated your letter to my Lord Archbishop and Lord Chancellor, who have agreed to meet to-morrow at nine in the morning, at the Archbishop's lodgings in the Cock Pit, I not being assured that your Grace's rooms were furnished. I have sent a summons to the rest of the Lords of the Cabinet, who are in town, those are only my Lord Privy Seal and the Earl of Romney.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 9, 1698.

I have spoke to my Lord Romney about meeting the Ambassador at his house, who will contrive it as

* From Newmarket.

soon as he can; but to-morrow he is invited to dine with the Ambassador, so it must be some other day. I wish it may not be at dinner for fear of the consequences. My Lord will send me notice the first time he is there, and I'll immediately go to him, which will be a more accidental rencontre.

I have found out his Carmelite Friar, who plies at the Spanish Ambassador's, but I hear he is in expectation to be entertained by the French Ambassador. He is, I am told of a good family, son of the Marquis d'Ovilliers, and after having lived in great debauchery, and the great companion of De Bussy in his lewdness, he threw himself among the Carmes-Deschaussés about ten years since, and he has been near two years in England. I have signed a warrant for the taking him up this night. The Archbishop's intelligencer could give him no account of this man, but he having the names of four other French Carmelite Friars, viz., Mander, Breton, Osfer, and La Rose, I have signed warrants for apprehending them all. The Ambassador will understand the meaning of it, and therefore I hope he won't complain, and d'Ovilliers will the less suspect why he is taken up. If he is found, I shall not examine him till his Majesty's pleasure be known, and then I hope it will be done by the Lords of the Cabinet Council.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 9, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 8th. The Lords of the Cabinet Council met this morning, viz. Lord Archbishop, Lord Chancellor, Lord Privy Seal, and Earl of Romney. Mrs. Hansard* and her brother were examined before them; for the substance of what passed I refer your Grace to the enclosed abstract of Mrs. Hansard's examination and deposition, and shall add to it, that the Lords find strong reasons to suspect that this gentlewoman was in a contrivance for laying the pistol in the chapel. And it is much to be doubted whether she was that day in the chapel or not, though she swears she was, and that she discoursed with the man that had the pistol in his hand. One thing very observable in her deposition was, that she saw my Lord Archbishop in the chapel, and had it in her thoughts to have revealed the business to him, whereas he was not there that day. She gives a very different account of the place, she says the pistol was laid down very remote from the place it was found, and she is positive the pistol was laid down before the sermon, when the gentlewoman who found it gives a plain, natural, and coherent account of it, says that a man stooped down after sermon and gave

* During the whole of William's reign constant plots were manufactured for the purpose of extracting rewards from the Government on their pretended discovery.

them notice there was a pistol lying there. Mrs. Hansard in the account she gave said many things very shufflingly. My Lord Chancellor looking more narrowly upon the letters of Macdonnel which she had put into my hand, observed that the first of those letters upon which she grounds her discovery had been altered in the date of it, and was therefore singed to disguise it. My Lord Chancellor found out that the letter had been dated the 5th of March, but was now changed to the 2nd of April, and they had made no alteration in the year, though the other letters were exact in that particular; and then it was easy to see that the letter was sullied and had been longer writ, so that it was pretty visible this trick was intended to be played, just that day month before, if his Majesty's not coming to the chapel or some other accident had not prevented it. However the Lords did not think fit at present to take notice to her of these particulars, that the Archbishop was not at church, and the letter had been twice dated; but were desirous to know what his Majesty would please to direct upon the information now given. And therefore they called her in only to tell her, that she should endeavour to discover Macdonnel and his accomplices, so as they may be apprehended, and that she should give me notice of it, as soon as she knew where any of them might be found. And if she received any more letters in the meantime they should be given to me, which she promised, pretending withal a great tenderness not

to expose the life of a man who had trusted her, and she thought herself embarrassed being under a double trust, first for the King's preservation, and then not to sacrifice one who had committed such a secret to her.

That which the Lords once thought of was to examine Captain Dixey, who being her acquaintance, and living in the house with her, it was supposed he might have laid down the pistol, but since then I have some reason to suspect it is her brother, who is a young, raw, obsequious fellow, and very capable of being imposed upon. A gentlewoman was with me this evening who was at the chapel and near the place where the pistol was laid. She says that she observed a young man kneeling down in that crowd, and wondered how he could bear it. The description she gives of him resembles very much this young fellow, as to his age, periwig, and features. If his Majesty pleases that this examination be proceeded on, it will be proper to confront these two together. I send your Grace both the examinations taken before the Lords and the letters of Mrs. Hansard, and those said to be Macdonnell's, which your Grace will please to return when his Majesty has seen them.

The information from Bristol was likewise laid before the Lords, who could find nothing else to be directed upon it, but that I should write to the Mayor to find out, if it were possible, the two persons the woman describes. In the meantime the

letters from Bristol to their members and others makes more noise of this matter than I hope it deserves.

I shewed my Lord Archbishop and Lord Chancellor the two letters yesterday given me of Martin Peau,* which they compared with the letter writ to the French ambassador; they find a good deal of resemblance in some letters, though those were in English, and writ much more in haste. My Lord Chancellor approves that I should write to the Sheriff of Worcester to know whether that man be still in the gaol, and to take care he be secured. I suppose it will be fit to send for him by habeas corpus, for he was committed by your Grace to the custody of a messenger as an alien, enemy, and spy. He was afterwards discharged by the Council upon his giving bail that he would go into Spain or Portugal. The rogue married a whore while he was in custody, and has never been out of England since. His first commitment bears the date the 25th of June 1695, which I suppose is the year that Namur was besieged, so there is no disagreement in that.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 10, 1698.

I send your Grace the Letters I received this morning from Paris, by which you will see that a

* I cannot clearly discover whether this name is written here Peau or Pean, but it seems to me clear, that person referred to is the same whose name is sometimes written Peace elsewhere.

little firmness when one has to deal with the French, will prevent a good deal of their imposing, and that my Lord Portland has set them right as to the first visit, when they were leading us out of the way. I think I ought now to forbear the accidental rencontre with the French Ambassador as was intended. I went, therefore, to my Lord Romney's to let him know what my Lord Portland writes of the directions sent to Comte Tallard to make the first visit, and that it will be best to see how he complies with it, lest they take new advantage by this middle way, and minute it down for a precedent.

I believe your Grace will be of opinion, that we should stay to be satisfied whether he has orders or not, or how far he will take notice of them. My Lord Romney will make no mention to him of these advices, but only tell him with great assurance, that he is in the wrong in this dispute.

I left with my Lord Romney a paper Mr. Prior sent me, a project of mixing of metals for cannon, so as to make them much lighter and more serviceable. He had a mind to speak to Colonel Brown about it, that it may be considered whether it will be worth while to invite the man over.

I have copied the list of dangerous persons, inserting Macarthy whom Prior speaks of, and I have sent it to Harwich and Dover, if any of them come that way.

A master of a vessel who lives at Rye, was brought to me some time since by Sir John Austen. He had been at Boulogne, and was engaged to bring

over two or three persons. I suppose they may be the same that Hogan mentions; the man has promised to be faithful and deliver them up. I don't hear he is yet returned, and perhaps Prior gives the reason for it, one of the villains being sick. I have just now the honour of your Grace's letter of the 9th. The copy I forgot to enclose was supplied last night by the original.

The messenger has not yet met with the Pere d'—. I was told he was lodged in Hedge Lane, at a house behind the Spanish Ambassador's chapel, which is in Suffolk Street; he did not lodge there, and they omitted to search the chapel-house, where, perhaps, they might have found him.

Your Grace will know his Majesty's pleasure upon the Lord Iveagh's petition. If my[1] Lord Strafford comes over, I shall make no difficulty to seize him, and send him to Newgate as an outlawed person.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 11, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of this day. I hope you will find yourself well enough to undertake this journey, and that you will not have the trouble of any more till you find yourself in perfect health.

I saw my Lord Wharton to-day, who talked of going to Newmarket this evening or to-morrow early. I think his brother is now in that condition that he

may be well enough left to the care of his doctors. I desired my Lord now you were to be altogether, that you would make an end one way or another. That if he were to be Secretary of State he would take the Seals quickly, or if that must not be, that he would content himself with something else, and be as well satisfied. I did not expect his answer, he being so much at liberty whether he will tell me his thoughts or not, and I can't judge of those I know so little, when they are in earnest.

But I think both he and many others wish that your Grace would not refuse the Staff, if it be pressed upon you, and readily consent that you be at your own disposal afterwards, so as to have no care upon you, but that of your health; and they do not desire to see you in that part upon any other terms which the King cannot approve of. They would rather preserve you for your own sake, and for the good you may do hereafter, than expose you to the hazards you must run by any present service.

If your Grace understood by my letter, that the King thought my Lord Wharton opposite to his interest; it was not what I meant, for he spoke of his opposition only in relation to my Lord Sunderland, and thought him the best disposed to a reconciliation of anybody.

The King does hardly believe that so many are averse to my Lord Sunderland's returning as has been represented. That may have had a false colour put upon it by the personal friendships he has with

some of the Whigs, and the obligations he has laid upon others. I hope it is not aimed at, that his coming again should disunite them, and make them a more inconsiderable party, and therefore fitter to be laid aside.

I suppose the King will now explain himself to your Grace, what are his exceptions against putting my Lord Wharton into that post, and that he will calmly hear them answered, if your Grace finds reason for it.

If the King is upon any great reserves with the other party, I believe he can do nothing so contrary to it, as the giving my Lord Wharton the Seals would be. Many of them do not stick at declaring, that they shall think themselves put out of protection when they see that done. They may censure him very hardly in it, and I believe he is pretty indifferent as to gaining their good opinion, and values himself at being thought at the greater distance from them.

I don't know but the Church would be pretty unanimous in giving him the exclusion, who are not much more favourable to my Lord Tankerville.

If all together be of such weight as to put my Lord Wharton by; it ought, however, not to be done with any marks of slight or displeasure against him. And there should appear as little of a refusal on the King's side as was possible. Affections and reasons of State may differ, and the latter may carry it, without calling the former into question. This, I

hope, may be at least effected by your Grace. So that both may be satisfied you have done your utmost, and neither be misunderstood, one by the other.

I may make a very wrong judgment of this matter, but I think the worst method of all is amusements, and resolving on nothing. It is little better than refusing a man every day, when there are denials that still keep a good grace.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 11th, 1698.

I was very sorry to find in Mr. Yard's letter that your Grace has had so great a relapse. My first wishes are, that you were perfectly well, and if that cannot be soon attained to, I wish you were at Eyford, or whatever other place may more contribute to your health.

I shall follow the directions Mr. Yard has sent me, and shall give the French Ambassador notice of what his Majesty has ordered upon his memorials. I suppose he must have received directions pursuant to what my Lord Portland writes. But I see no marks of it from himself. My Lord Romney dines with him to-day, the party of yesterday being put off; perhaps he may say something to him.

I suppose he may think it time enough to make his visit after his public audience, or at least he

would speak of it to his Majesty first, and give all plausible turns to it, why he stood it out so long, and for what reason he thinks of doing it at last. In the meantime I conclude I must keep my ground, and make no advances of any kind; if it be otherwise, your Grace will please to instruct me.

As to the seizing of Macdonnell, that would have been long since done if any body knew where to find him. We are promised it now, but I am not much inclined to believe it. Mrs. Hansard was with me this evening, and brought me another letter from her gallant (a copy whereof is enclosed). She says she has appointed a meeting in Covent Garden Piazza, on Wednesday next, exactly at five in the evening; but she does not yet tell me in what part of it. Her brother, who came with her, undertakes the seizing of him, if he may be assisted, and I have promised he shall have a messenger with him, and what soldiers shall be needful.

I'll speak to my Lord Romney about it, that some discreet officer may be employed. She had a mind to begin some discourse about the charges she had been at in attending this affair. I told her all that should be considered when the man was taken.

Yesterday the chapel keeper at St. James's sent me a young man whom he had seized that morning in the church, upon the information of some of the women, that they had seen him there the Sunday before, and he knelt down near to the form where the pistol was found. Upon examination, he ap-

peared to be a glover of Hereford, who works now at that trade in the city. He came to St. James's chapel the first Sunday out of curiosity, having never seen the King before, and yesterday he brought a friend with him to see the Princess. I took the deposition, which is enclosed, and then I sent a messenger with him to be informed who he was. Having received an account from Mr. Morgan, parliament man for Hereford, that he knew him to be a harmless honest fellow, a good protestant, and well affected to the government; and his master, with whom he works, coming with him and begging to see him forthcoming, I dismissed him that night, seeing no grounds for suspecting him.

I have spoke to the Secretary of Scotland about the pirates, who had not heard any thing of them before; but he would write into Scotland and let them know his Majesty's pleasure about their prosecution.

I can't yet take any of my Carmelite friars. The Dutch mail arriving late this evening, I send the letters to Mr. Yard, who will give your Grace an account which of them are fit to be laid before the King; for my own part, I shall hardly have time to read any of them.

I enclose a letter that I have just now received from the French Ambassador, it carries more the shew of a visit than any of the former.

SOUTHWARK WITHDRAWN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 12, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 11th, and am extremely obliged to your patronage of my son as well as myself.

I do not know that Mr. Cunningham wants a licence to return; he is governor to my Lord Home, son to the Earl of Argyle. It was only desired I should recommend him to Sir James Ogilvie, which I have done. He looks upon him as one of the ablest men of his profession. And that the work he has designed of bringing the body of the Roman law into a narrower compass and a better method, he thinks will be of great use to those that are guided by it, as they are in Scotland. And it being an undertaking above his purse, it must lie still without some encouragement. Sir James will give him all the assistance (he can), and if there be occasion to have recourse to his Majesty, I hope he will not refuse it.

I saw my Lord Romney to-day to desire he would let me have an officer and some men to-morrow to attend Mrs. Hansard in Covent Garden. I heard from him that the French Ambassador was gone this morning to Newmarket. I hope he will have seen your Grace before he comes back, and make you the compliment that he came so far on purpose.

I have received this day another letter from Mrs.

Hansard, whereof I enclosed a copy. I know not what sort of jilt she will prove at last. But I am surprised to find her own in this letter that she was little less than perjured in her first deposition, when she said she had not seen Macdonnal for some years, before she met him accidentally between St. Alban's and Barnet.

I perceive there has been more than a promise, between them, of future kindness. Whether she will deliver him up at last, I know not; but there will be no longer jesting in the matter, if she fails.

I have committed Bussy to Newgate for high treason. There was found, among his papers which the messenger brought away, several commissions given him by King James, as well in Ireland as elsewhere. These are pretty recommendatory letters for a man to bring with him into England, when the late law makes it high treason for any one to keep them by him after the 14th of February.

I shall let Mr. Prior know that my Lord Iveagh has nothing to expect here.

I have heard nothing of Hogan yet, though one might have wished the man at Rye had not undertaken to secure the men he is to bring over; yet it must now take its chance, for I know not where to send to him, if it were necessary to give him other directions, which perhaps would not be adviseable neither. It is hard to know upon what principles informers act, and all is not in their power that they promise or intend to perform. One ought very well

to know those one trusts in a matter of such consequence. One may pretend a discovery in order to secure oneself against accidents or treachery, and yet go on with a villainy, as far as there is hopes of driving it. I wish we had some of these rogues any way. I cannot meet with any of the friars. I hope the French Ambassador will have satisfied his Majesty in all the parts of that discovery.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 13, 1698.

A pacquet arriving this morning from Paris, I send your Grace the letters I have received. I find my Lord Portland desires now to know when he shall be recalled. If I am to make any answer to it, your Grace will please to direct me in what manner.

My son sends me two letters that deserve consideration; they were put into his hands by a person that I employ with his Majesty's privity, who has been at Calais for a considerable time, renewing his acquaintance with David Lloyd, and is but lately come to Paris; I hope he may be serviceable there. He mentions a Talbot, that is coming over upon a secret message. Perhaps your Grace may know of what family he is, and it may be the easier to have him watched. Your Grace will please to send me the letters back when you have shewn them to the King. I will, in the meantime, make some enquiry about

this young man, who lives near Shoreham. It will be hard to know what should be done to the French Ambassador's courier, who has undertaken to bring over the St. Germain letters.

I have had Mrs. Hansard with me this morning, and shewed her and her brother to the officer of the Guards, and all things are concerted for the apprehending of Macdonnall, if there has been any such appointment in Covent Garden as she tells us.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 13, 1698.

Having had the honour to write to your Grace this noon, I have only now to add, that our party is come in from Covent Garden, but have made no prisoners. The gentlewoman was there according to appointment, but nobody else appeared. After she had waited about two hours, she told a gentleman I had engaged to be assisting, that she was afraid the man had suspected something that kept him from coming. She would therefore step home, and perhaps she might find a letter from him. Accordingly she went away, and came back again soon after, and said she had met with a letter, which she offered to read under the Piazzas, but was advised to do it rather in a shop. And then she put on a great concern at it, and said she would bring it to me; but instead thereof she sent it me by her bro-

ther, with another short letter, copies of both which are enclosed. I must own I should have been more surprised if she had sent me the man. As for her letters, I am used to them, but if the inditer of them would have brought me in for blabbing the secret, they would have done it more artificially, if they had named some person, who ever had been at my table, where I am sure neither she nor her spark were ever mentioned there. And for Colonel Roe, if there be any such man in being, it is more than I know. All that I can do with these and her former letters, is to lay them before a Committee of Lords, who have appointed to meet to-morrow morning at your Grace's office, upon the occasion of Sir George Wheeler's being taken up. My Lord Archbishop of Canterbury being very inclinable to believe that he has been maliciously and falsely sworn against.

I hope to give you an account by to-morrow's post, what the Lords sentiments are concerning Mrs. Hansard.

I trouble your Grace with a letter I received this day from the Lords Justices of Ireland, recommending a Captain Carrol, a disbanded officer, to a vacant lieutenancy in Sir H. Bellases' regiment.

The enclosed from my Lord Portland should have been sent at noon.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 14, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of yesterday. It must be a concern to me whenever your Grace does not find yourself well enough to write; but otherwise, I am very well satisfied you should not have the trouble of it.

The Lords met to-day at your Grace's office, and were acquainted with yesterday's disappointment. They saw the letters both of Mrs. Hansard and Macdonnel. My Lord Chancellor was of opinion that his Majesty being so soon expected, it would be best to give him an account of the matter at his return, and know his pleasure as to the further examining into it, and taking the woman up.

Those that my Lord Romney employed have found a gunsmith that sold the pistol; he was examined, and said he sold a pair of pistols about three months since to an Englishman in ordinary clothes, aged about thirty. That, therefore, cannot be Mrs. Hansard's brother.

The examination that held the Lords the longest this morning, was Sir George Wheeler's, one of the Prebends of Durham, who has been taken up upon the accusation of a young fellow named Shears, who married his daughter. He was charged with sending money to King James, and his wife's uncle, Dean Greenville; that the Higgon's, his brothers-in-law

were frequently with him; and he joined with them in their more than disaffected discourses against the government. That when the association was carried about to be signed by the Prebends of Durham, he did not sign it, though he pretended it, but made his servant write his master's name to it. He denied every article of the charge, and gave a very plausible account of his own behaviour and his son-in-law's, occasioned by his holding fast part of his daughter's portion, till the promised settlement were made good to her. But when it came to the point of the association, he did not go on so cleverly; he said he signed it here in London, when the Bishop of Durham sent it him; but he could not remember whether any one was present; he did it in haste, being just going out. He talked so much of his hand being known, and referred to the instrument itself whether it were his writing, that my Lord Chancellor suspected he was prevaricating in that point. Whereupon he was called in again and examined more particularly to it. He still said he signed it, and that it was his hand. But always hesitated when he was asked whether he himself writ his name. At last, my Lord Chancellor asking him downright, whether it were not Thomas Simpson that writ his name, he immediately confessed it, saying he would not deal disingenuously with them. This avowal, after so many equivocations, quite destroyed the character he would have given himself by the witnesses he produced, to prove that he was

of the greatest integrity, and the most exemplary sanctity that they ever knew in any man. By what I have now heard, there never was so true a Pharisee; he was affectedly devout in outward shew, using all the ceremonies both of the Greek and Western Churches; his practice was to pray and sing psalms, while he and his friends were travelling in his coach. I hear they have a much less opinion now of his saintship. He is remanded to the messenger's custody, and his man Simpson is sent for from Durham.

I send your Grace an extract of Macky's letter, which gives an account of the French courier having scattered his letters on the road. I wish they had fallen into the hands of some who knew how to make better use of them than a postboy. It would have been a very good opportunity to be satisfied whether these men bring over other letters besides the Ambassador's, as the late advice from Paris tells us.

I would have spoken to Sir Thomas Frankland or Sir Robert Cotton about it, if they had been in the House to-day; they both being absent, I have writ to Sir Thomas Frankland by way of enquiry whether it be true or not.

I hear nothing of the French Ambassador, not so much as whether he be come to town or not. I thought your Grace would have had a formal visit from him.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 16, 1698.

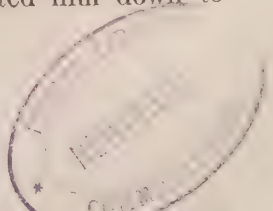
I received yesterday the honour of your Grace's letter of the 14th, and the same evening I received the King's and your Grace's letters from my Lord Portland and Mr. Prior, which were sent forward immediately. I am a little in pain for my correspondent at Paris, lest he should not think himself so safe now he is to change hands. I have writ to my Lord Portland, that he will consider of it, and not let his service be lost, or he exposed for it.

I'll endeavour to know who this Talbot is, by an Irishman who offers me his service, and I will write to Mr. Cook to know who the person was he would have introduced to your Grace.

I shall acquaint the Lords Justices with your Grace's readiness to get their desires complied with, but Sir Henry Bellases has been again beforehand with them. It will be a great disheartening to the disbanded officers, if the colonels shall still be allowed to sell their vacancies, and exclude men of service. The disbanded officers in Ireland, I think, are not to have half-pay, and that makes it harder upon them. The King has seldom disposed of vacant commands in Ireland, but at the recommendation of the Lords Justices, which keeps up the respect of the colonels and preserves their authority, now there are so many of the old regiments

gone into Ireland, and perhaps that method were better to be altered a little. The Lords Justices knowing no others but their own disbanded officers, would be apt to recommend those only. And the King thinks those that are disbanded here, fitter to be employed as persons that have given greater proof of themselves, besides the putting them into posts, will by degrees ease the nation of this charge. I think, if there were a list made in Ireland, and sent to his Majesty for his approbation, of such as deserve the preference to the employments that shall fall vacant, and that another list were sent from hence to the Lords Justices of such English or Scotch officers as the King would have taken care of in Ireland, the Lords Justices might have a rate for their recommendations, according to such proportion as shall be directed, either the preferments to be equally divided to those of both nations, since the disbanded officers here will solely engross the regiments remaining in England, or two-thirds of the officers from hence. This would do right to the officers, hinder the selling of places, and provide for the best deserving, since it would be a fortunate disposal to those who happen first to hear of the vacancy and make the earliest application. If your Grace thinks this worth considering, I submit it to your better judgment.

The French Ambassador made me a visit yesterday, which I returned to-day. I received him at the bottom of the stairs, and conducted him down to



the door, as I understood by Sir Charles Cotterell was customary. But I observed he expected me at the door of his apartment above stairs; and therefore upon coming away, and we were upon compliment whether he should go down stairs with me, I excused, rather desiring to be left where he made it his choice to receive me. He was indeed very pressing yesterday that I should not have conducted him down, but I would not abate any thing that was due to him.

He began his visit yesterday by alleging the reasons why his visit had been deferred. That he thought what had been done to three of his predecessors successively would still have been observed. But his Majesty having told him that the practice was otherwise ever since his being in England, he had acquainted the King his master with it, and received his directions to conform to the present usage. I let him understand that this reign had made no innovation in that point, and we happened to have two masters of ceremonies now in being, who both served the two last Kings, and they declared the practice was always the same.

We had some other discourse about his memorials, and I find he has more to deliver relating to ships.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 17, 1698.

I received this morning the honour of your Grace's letter of the 16th, and had an opportunity to read it to his Majesty before he went from Kensington to church. His Majesty expressed himself much concerned at your being very ill, and said he would press nothing on you; but that you might do whatever should be best for your health; only he desired that you would not let your resolutions of quitting the seals be known. And did not think it fit I should make any mention of it either to my Lord Chancellor or Mr. Montague. I have said therefore no more to the latter, whom I saw presently after, but that your Grace found your distemper increase upon you, however you would endeavour to be at Wooburn to-morrow night. He told me he would write to your Grace to let you know how you may be accommodated with the Princess's lodgings at Hampton Court, and that he thinks he can secure you there from all manner of troublesome visits. I only answered, I would send his letter when he thought fit.

Since his Majesty has a mind to have this matter kept in suspense, your Grace will please to let me know, whether it may not be proper that Mr. Yard should continue to give his attendance when the King goes to Windsor. And since your Grace's

going to Eyford cannot be concealed above a day or two, I humbly conceive it would be best that your friends be acquainted your journey is not only with his Majesty's privity, but by his direction in consideration of your health.*

I intend to propose it to his Majesty to-morrow morning, who has commanded me to attend him, and I believe I shall not send this letter sooner, now I know Mr. Chancey is going.

I have said nothing to Mr. Yard of this matter, and he shall not know I have a letter for him, till I have orders to deliver it.

To shew your Grace I designed to write to you last night, if I had known whither to direct a letter, I now send you what I had then prepared.

An account was given the King this evening at the Cabinet Council of Mrs. Hansard's discoveries, whereupon I am ordered to take her and her brother into custody, together with Captain Dixey and his wife, who came over with her from Ireland to lodge in the same house. I have signed warrants for

* The obstinacy of the King in forcing Sunderland upon a ministry from whom he differed, and the hatred and jealousy of Wharton and the Whigs towards that nobleman, the resolution of William not to give the seals to so violent and domineering a man as Wharton, and the fixed resolve of Shrewsbury to resign, had created such a schism in the Cabinet that the ministry was every hour threatened with dissolution. Shrewsbury, as we have seen, met the King and several of the ministers at Newmarket in the beginning of April, but finding that he could do nothing to smooth angry passions or reconcile contending interests, returned abruptly to Eyford.

them, and have given orders to bring away all writings they can find, which will be necessary to be compared to get at the bottom of this mystery.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 18, 1698.

I come now from Kensington. His Majesty approves that your Grace's going to Eyford be spoken of as done by his consent, as the best means for your recovering.

The King is not without apprehensions that your going away thus on a sudden will be interpreted, as if you were dissatisfied that my Lord Wharton had not the Seals, and they will say, that in that case, you would have been prevailed upon to take the White Staff.

I said I thought your journey to Newmarket, where so many were witnesses of your ill health, would satisfy people of the necessity you were under for retiring from business, and I had not spoke with any one, who was not of that opinion. His Majesty said he was sorry you were so ill, but he thought your bearing the name of Lord Chamberlain would not have made you worse, and he did not expect you should have done the functions of it.

If your Grace approves of it, you will direct Mr. Yard to attend the King at Windsor: he has got

some inkling as if your Grace were intending for Eyford.

We have taken up Mrs. Hansard and her brother, with the captain and his wife. I hope the Lords will meet to examine them.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 19, 1698.

Mr. Chancey has brought me this evening the honour of your Grace's letter, which I shall carry to Kensington to-morrow morning, and when I have laid it before the King, I will let you know, by the same messenger, how it was received. I hope his Majesty will be well pleased that you seem already much easier upon the liberty you have to retire, and that you do not renounce his service further than your want of health calls you off from it. I shall be mighty glad to see Sir Charles Hedges encouraged. I think he is the only man of the faculty one needs to have any concern for.

The Lords met to-day upon the examination of Mrs. Hansard, and the rest taken up on her account. It seems she came into England in man's apparel, and continued so for a fortnight in town, and she had but a very cracked reputation in Dublin, being addicted to thieving. They say Colonel Cunningham and Palmer, Mr. Pulteney's deputy, can give an account how chaste she was. She brazened it

out to the Lords, and maintained all she had said of Macdonnel was true. But for the other part of her conduct, she said that was of no use to have it inquired into, and therefore she would answer no questions about it. I find she has a passion for Mrs. Dixey, her kinswoman, whom she brought over with her. And this gentlewoman being taken up and kept in another messenger's custody, puts her into great concern. And this night she has writ to me, to let me know that she would confess all, and throw herself at the King's mercy. I sent her word when I saw the heads of her confession, I would get the Lords to meet and receive it. So much, I think, is already plain, that there never were two such hardened liars as she and her brother.

My Lord Chancellor gave me to-day the letter of Martin Peau, which he writ to your Grace, with another to the King. They are very different hands; but one of them comes near to that which was writ to the French Ambassador. I wonder I have no letter from the High Sheriff of Worcester, in answer to mine about this man. I hope they have not let him out of prison, and therefore do not care to take any notice of it.

I can't possibly find the lodging of Pere d'Ouvilliers;* I hear he is going very soon to Holland. I

* This name, as also that of Peau above, is written differently in various parts of the manuscript; and in this instance, as in that of all other names of persons of no historical importance, I leave them as I find them.

have endeavoured to waylay him at Harwich, Dover, and Gravesend.

I have read to the King the two advices I had from Paris.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 28, 1698.

I received yesterday the honour of your Grace's letter of the 25th inst., which I have laid before his Majesty this morning, with the inclosed from Sir Harry Colt. The King thinks your observation very just upon the behaviour of men out of business towards those that are in it, which would, in a great measure be cured, if they themselves were employed, and put into the same dangers they have raised against others.

I thought Sir Harry had something in view, when I saw him lately speaking to the King. And as a further confirmation of it, he told me on Sunday last, that some persons had desired him to go on with them in searching at the Signet Office, whether the list of licences I brought to the House agreed with the entries at the Signet and Privy Seal.

I acquainted the King with it, who sent to speak with him the next day. As he came from the King, he told me that he hearkened only to these kind of proposals, to make use of them for the King's ser-

vice. That he asked them whether they intended any reflexion on the King, which they said they did not; but perhaps they should find some others faulty.

I acquainted the King with the answer I made them, that I did not think myself of that consideration, as that any body should think it worth while to attack me. If they were so disposed, I would put them in a shorter way, and a much fairer, to compass their ends. And wherein I would join with them, if they would go to work above board, and tell the King I was unfit for the station I am in. I should own it, and be very ready, whenever his Majesty pleased to make room for a better; but if they thought to drive me out by laying things to my charge I was not guilty of, I owed that to my reputation to justify myself as well as I could.

Your Grace pretty well knows what a perverse humour is predominant in some people, and I wish the preferring them for it do not increase these hydras. For my own part, I had rather fall their sacrifice, than oblige them at that rate. But this shall not hinder me from obeying all your Grace's commands, and moving the King in this in whatever manner you think fit.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 30, 1698.

Though there be little to acquaint your Grace with, I would not omit letting you know what progress we make in the House of Commons.

The next week the Malt is to be proposed. I think they will only ask the continuance of it for two years longer. They compute it at about 600,000*l.* per annum.

The King is desirous to have a trial made, whether the proposal of the East India Company will be accepted of.* Your Grace knows the opposition it will meet with whenever it is proposed; rather than it should go, I believe there will be offers made of raising a greater sum upon that trade some other way, if they are disposed to sell it. Whether they will be effectual or not, is another question.

Upon the death of my Lord Cornwallis, Sir Thomas Felton and Mr. Harvey are desirous that lieutenancy should be given to my Lord Orford; but he has no great mind to it; however they will

* The old East India Company guarded by charters, and having a strong claim for great services, had been applied to for a loan, and offered to raise 700,000*l.* This, however, was not sufficient to meet Montague's expectations, and a body of merchants was found who were willing to furnish the sum of two millions, at eight per cent., on condition of an exclusive right of trade to the East Indies. Although this was utterly subversive of all the rights of the old Company, Montague seized the expedient; brought in a bill in favour of a New Company, and, in *spite* of petition, remonstrance, and strong opposition in Parliament, carried it through both Houses. To this transaction frequent allusions are hereafter made.

press it as far as they can. They have no exception to the young Lord Cornwallis, more than their doubts that now he has lost his father, he may be more under the conduct of his grandfather. Mr. Montague is like to be a widower, my Lady Manchester being very ill, with little hopes of recovery.

We have no letters either from Holland or Paris. It is said the King will be here on Tuesday next.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 3, 1698.

I could never have thought that your Grace had contributed to the raising a suspicion, as if hands were to be changed. But it was got into a whisper, that your Grace declined business, because you could not act with those you most desired. As to the changing of hands, it was what his Majesty expostulated with the three lords, that he neither could or would do it, but desired to have some latitude for his choice, provided it was still among the party * * * *

As to the perverse gentlemen, there is no doubt they are to be kept in humour as far as is fitting; but if they can be reclaimed too, it will be better for them and the rest of mankind.

Mr. Colt has been telling me of late, that Fisher was very intent upon bringing his business into the House of Lords, and he made a great merit of it,

that he kept him from doing it. I have heard so much of these menaces, that I have told him as often, I knew nobody was afraid of it, and they would almost do well to consider, whether this were the way to attain their ends, which I saw was making a fortune of late. Mr. Fisher has vouchsafed to accost me, which was a surprising kindness from him who always kept at a distance before. Seeing him put on an air of familiarity, I asked him what he meant by his threats of appealing to the Parliament. He said it was not in his thoughts; but Mr. Colt, and others he would not name, pressed him to it; and he went out of town on purpose to be out of the way of their importunities. To confirm what he had said, he came to me yesterday, and would needs shew me the parts of some letters he received from Mr. Colt, before he came up to Parliament. I found the drift of them was to exasperate Fisher upon the disappointments they had met with, and, for his part, he would be no longer fed with fair words and promises; but they must think of laying the matter before the Parliament, and they too did not doubt the House of Commons in England would reward them as liberally as the Parliament in Ireland had done to Prendergast. He gives him likewise some cautions, and one of them was, that he should not open himself to Vernon; and he appoints him a meeting the first night of his coming to town, that they might consult together. There were other parts in those letters which he

did not shew me, but said they contained some persons' names who were to be accused, and it was of so high a nature, that he did not care any body should see it.

I was well enough pleased to have so far an insight into their mystery, and gave him good words, that his proceeding thus candidly before, had been some benefit to him, and I hoped he would always find the effects of the same method.

If the King can be prevailed upon to do some little thing for him at present, I suppose it would help to break the cabal; yet after all I cannot have a much better opinion of him, as suspecting his suppleness proceeds from a despair of doing anything in their violent way. One thing I omitted, that Colt repeats in his letters, which was, that there would be an indemnity pass this session, and if they could be cajoled till that was over, they should be slighted and laughed at afterwards.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 5, 1698.

I have received the honour of your Grace's letter of the 2nd, and shall acquaint the King with what Sir William Beeston writes. I perceive he has himself writ to the Spanish Ambassador, and I suppose a copy of his letter must be sent likewise to Mr. Stanhope.

I have employed, Mr. Madox at the Council

Office, to search if any thing were ordered about the Genoa resident at the beginning of the revolution. I know he has been always here, and I do not remember that any thing particularly has been objected against him. I suppose, therefore, when their Envoy arrives, if it be desired that Ottons (for that I think is his name) remain here as agent, I do not know there will be any difficulty in it. It comes now into my mind, that this man was once with your Grace; whether it was that he was sent for, or had any thing to represent to you, I have forgot.

If our busy gentlemen make any search at the Signet Office, it is to discover whether all who have had warrants from the Secretary's Office, have taken out their licences under the Privy Seal. There are some of those who, I believe, were poor ordinary people, and could not lay down three or four pounds, which the fees amounted to. I do not see how I can be answerable for their neglect, though they may be unsafe by it; and yet many of their cases are so compassionate, that whoever would make a crime of it, I think he would only shew his own ill-nature.

I hear my Lord Orford does absolutely refuse to meddle with the lieutenancy of Suffolk. I hope, therefore, my Lord Cornwallis will have it, who has behaved himself hitherto exactly well, and I believe would continue so, if the party had not disgusted him by preferring another, and his circumstances

do not put him under the influence of his grandfather and uncle.

I am now going to Kensington to wait for the King's return thither.

I am now come from Kensington, where I found Mr. Montague and Mr. Smith, who have given his Majesty an account of the proposal,* and the reception it has met with in the House. There is no doubt but it will be very well liked if it succeeds; but the King is doubtful whether such a sum can be raised, and it may be a long amusement if it fails. I hear Heathcoat, Sheppard, and Sir William Scawen are the great promoters of it; but there must be many more before any thing can be made of it.

The King inquired after your Grace's health, and was glad to hear it was mended.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 7, 1698.†

I asked Fisher yesterday who those persons were that should have been accused according to the scheme. He named to me my Lord Portland and Lord Chancellor, and that your Grace was to have been brought in; but he opposed. This he has told you himself. I would have been satisfied what they could have charged the other two with, but he pretended not to know. This is a blessed gang;

* In regard to the East India Bill.

† I suspect that a part of the original letter is wanting.

they do not care who they accuse when they hope to get any thing by it, and when that fails them, and they despair of success, they impeach one another, which is the only thing they ought to be believed in.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 10, 1698.

I have received the honour of your Grace's letter of the 6th. I would willingly bring Fisher to be honest if I could, but he has such a wrong turn, that I can't well hope for it. If his Majesty remembers him to-morrow at the Treasury, it may give me a greater credit with him, and I will make the best use of it I can.

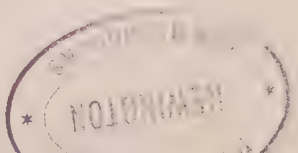
What my Lord Sunderland intends I am a perfect stranger to, and there are none of my acquaintance that hear from him of late.

Ben Overton does now and then appear as a mediator, but without credentials or powers. He has lately had some discourse with my Lord Chancellor, which was but the continuing a conference that was began some ten or twelve days before, and it broke up in the same manner, by his lordship's being called away without coming to any conclusion. Ben's point is to shew that a connexion with my Lord Sunderland would be a strengthening of the Whig interest; but when that article is civilly yielded, I see no advances made to bring it about. It was

said that the party had entirely submitted it to your Grace, and they should acquiesce in whatever you thought fit, and if nothing was concluded, it was because the King gave you no opportunity to speak to him of this matter.

This Mr. Overton told me as a secret, which he said he would communicate to nobody else; but he concluded there was no disposition to a reconcilement, and therefore it was but lost labour to be promoting it. Whether that be or not, I suppose my Lord Sunderland will be in town about Midsummer, and then he must live with people as they will allow him.

I think, in a crisis as to interests, if Mr. Montague's proposal succeeds, as the appearances are fair at present, he will not only disappoint all the designs of the opposite party, but yet further establish the credit of himself and his friends. If there should be a failure, it would be a public as well as private misfortune; and one cannot say, but it must be a chance, whether two effective millions shall be raised upon a project. I hear 800,000*l.* is already subscribed: when it comes up to a million it will be brought before the parliament, and I suppose they will begin to think of the bill for the fund and the settling of the trade. The hazards to be apprehended are, that the sum cannot be completed, unless the present East India Company think fit to bring in their quota; and it is rather to be presumed, that they will do all they can to baffle the design rather than promote it. The subscribers themselves may be apt to jar, whether the trade shall be carried on



by a joint stock or a regulated company, the latter of which is most to the advantage of those that are skilled in trade; and in this way the main body of the subscribers will be never the better for the sole privilege of trading, since they know not how to make use of it. Besides, the parliament may cool their courage, if they should pretend to regulate the trade in a manner the subscribers should not like.

It is certain an unlimited bringing of wrought silks must destroy that manufacture here, and be a great prejudice to woollen stuff. If the subscribers be debarred from buying them in, they may ask, where their profit lies, to go to India and come back again with pepper, if they can find it; and if they furnish the foreign markets merely with Indian silks, it may abate proportionably the consumption of our own stuffs. Who knows what a jealousy such an establishment may raise in Holland, when they see that trade driven from hence with a fresh credit, a large stock, and no charge or incumbrances upon it, which are advantages that must give them the superiority in all markets. In the last place, the interlopers, who are the forwardest in this subscription, and have writ the largest sum, may be supposed to do it more for the hindering any acts passing in favour of the East India Company, than that they design any national good; and when they have defeated the Company's establishment, they had rather leave the trade as it is, than pay any thing for the liberty they already enjoy.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 12, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 9th, and send this by a messenger, to whom your Grace will please to give your directions, that he may find out Martin Peau. If we can't get him to own the letter, it is but letting him go at last.

I hear the Friar d'Ouvilliers is still in town, but he conceals himself so well that I cannot seize him. He intends to go within a few days for France; I shall try if he can be taken at any of the ports.

His Majesty had forgot to give any orders yesterday to the Treasury about Mr. Fisher; but he is pleased I should write to them to give him 100*l.* If this puts him in good humour, I shall ask him more questions than I believe he will answer for his French correspondent; the soonest one can know that will be at my Lord Portland's return, and then I suppose I shall be wiser.

I have got Aubrey Price again in custody. The Treasury sent to me yesterday a woman that was taken putting off a counterfeit exchequer bill, which had been changed from 5*l.* to 50*l.* She has sworn she had it from Price, who was to give her 10*l.* for putting it off. He is to be examined to-morrow by the Lords of the Treasury and myself, which my Lord Chancellor thinks more adviseable than that I should do it myself. I suppose the end of it will

be the sending him to Newgate, and let Sir Harry Colt let him out if he can.

I hear the subscription is rose to 900,000*l*. We suppose it will be a million by Tuesday next, and then the House will fall to consider of the Bill.

We had a pacquet from Paris yesterday of the 7th instant, but it brings little news. The King of Spain was rather better, since he has been in a course of steel. The French make a very small reform of their troops; but Mr. Prior writes as if there were no great number of ships fitting out. My Lord Portland thinks of staying a fortnight after his audience, and thinks it would be necessary that my Lord Jersey were there before he came away. But that there is no likelihood of.

The King dined yesterday with my Lord Jersey at his Lodge in the Park.

The King goes to the Parliament House on Monday, to pass the Coal Act; and on Tuesday to Windsor.

The woman who swears against Price, telling me of two of his companions, Davis and Carter, that are known for old coiners, I sent this morning to search the Fleet prison, where Carter was committed; Legat, the messenger, who was employed in it, can inform your Grace how these keepers of prisons behave themselves.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 14, 1698.

I acquainted your Grace in my last, that I had taken up Price for counterfeiting exchequer bills. He was examined yesterday before the Lords of the Treasury, and was at his old way of shuffling in matters that concerned himself; and when he owned any thing, it was with an insinuation, that what he did was with design to serve the Government in the discovery of these practices. I shewed him a letter of his that was taken out of the pocket of Carter, who was searched that morning in the Fleet prison. There were expressions in it which shewed they wanted something necessary for their business. And he was puzzled enough to tell what he meant by it, but he took care to give the Lords of the Treasury no satisfaction, so, by their advice, I committed him to Newgate for felony, upon the statute about exchequer bills.

I have a letter from him this evening, wherein he tells me he is in irons and close confined: he desires I will send Sir Harry Colt to him, and he will tell him all he knows relating to that affair and to the government.

But that is not the method I shall take. I will lay his before the King to-morrow at the Council, and there, I hope orders will be given who shall go to him from the Treasury or my office, if not from

the trustees for the exchange of exchequer bills, who had the first notice of this matter.

Old Charlton died on Wednesday last; I see nobody that is more concerned for him than Mr. John Colt. His son, to my knowledge, has been long ashamed of the conversation he saw his father was got into. I am apt to think his illness was Mr. Fisher's motive for applying to me.

Harry Buckley is dead at the Bath, and Mr. Barrard, member for Lymington, died lately here.

The subscriptions are come to 1,100,000*l.*

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 17, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 14th, and did not think of giving you the trouble to explain what had passed in relation to my Lord Sunderland; but since you are pleased to do it, I may, some time or other, make some use of it, as there shall be occasion to let Lord Sunderland see your Grace's kindness and sincerity towards him. I do not know whether any body else will endeavour to do him that service, or is capable to undertake it. I believe he will be here when the Parliament rises. How people will then look upon one another, I do not know: chance produces almost as many things as contrivance and foresight.

I forgot to mention Colonel Godfrey's having the Jewel Office, when the warrant was signed. He officiated yesterday at the House of Lords, and brought the King the crown. I know not whether Colonel Mordaunt takes it ill that the place was so soon disposed of, but I hear that he is gone into the country.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 19, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 16th. I suppose Peau will be found at last; in the meantime, I am sorry your Grace has so much trouble about him.

I have heard no more of Price: if any are disposed to support him (which I know nothing of), they will find they are meddling in a foul business.

The King dined yesterday at my Lord Villers' Lodge, and went from thence to Windsor. I suppose he will come back on Saturday.

My Lord and Lady Clancarty go away for Hamburgh on Monday next.

Mr. Yard went yesterday to attend on the King at Windsor.

I hear Dr. Wickhart, who went over as one of my Lord Portland's chaplains, is come back.

I expect my Lord Manchester will be here tomorrow.

The House of Lords have addressed the King that he will give orders for prosecuting Duncomb, Knight and Burton. It is very probable the Lords will shew a severity themselves upon Sir Rowland Gwynn's impeachments. He has brought over from Holland one Barilleau, who was an associate of Gondel's. He has discovered the whole mystery of their trade, and will give evidence against them. Sir Rowland has got himself a good deal of reputation by his diligent and prudent management of this prosecution, and nobody will grudge it him, as long as his industry is employed in the service of the public, and ferreting out rogues.

I hope his being so well employed, will make him honester and innoffensive in all other particulars.

Goodwyn Wharton creeps about again; he came this afternoon to my house to make me a visit; he is a maimed, weak creature.

Colonel Mordaunt is come to town, but does not yet assist in the House.

I think we have our fund now for the two millions, if we can keep it. The next debate will be upon what foot the trade to the East Indies shall be settled. Sir Christopher Musgrave begins to call for it already. There is a strong combination to puzzle the cause in that particular, and the disagreement between the subscribers may help it on. The interlopers having a particular interest to keep the trade free, that they may run away with the sole advantage of it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 21, 1698.

The King is come back this evening from Windsor. My Lord Manchester was waiting at Kensington to kiss his hand, who arrived yesterday from France. He was obliging in the enquiries after your Grace's health: he thinks the King of France inclinable enough to keep the peace, unless the death of the King of Spain should alter it.

The news of the Parliament is pretty curious these two days, by the new fund that is agreed on, and the book* writ in Ireland to shake the authority of the English parliament. Mr. Methuen acted prudently to make the complaint of it himself, for there were enough ready to do it, if they could but have got one of the books, which Mr. Methuen took care to secure in time. Sir Rowland Gwynn and Mr. Arnold were upon the hunt after them, and would have given any money for one of them. But Mr. Smith and Mr. Clark put more business upon the committee than I believe Mr. Methuen desired, which was to enquire what proceedings had been in Ireland to embolden this penman. It is certain that he presented his book to the Lords Justices, but that the House knows nothing of as yet. Mr. Methuen, upon further consideration, is better satisfied that the committee should go to the bottom of

* William Molineux's pamphlet upon the Independence of Ireland.

it, since it may be the best way to put a check to a humour that may be otherwise troublesome in Ireland. I find some charge it already upon my Lord Capel's party.

Legat has brought up Peau, I know not well what to do with him at last. I should think it might still be in the Council's power to send him away, since they had once ordered it.

It would not be like Grieves' case, which Sir William was so much frightened at.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 24, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 21st instant, and shall to-morrow subscribe 4,000*l.* for your Grace. I have told Sir Harry Farnese of it already, who being a zealous promoter of the subscriptions, is mightily pleased with it.

Your Grace will see, by the account of this day's proceedings, that the project is like to succeed.

Sir Harry Farnese thinks there is so little fear of the subscriptions not being full, that he believes they would rather run up to three millions; and the interlopers whom I was afraid of, intend to be public-spirited, and will submit to an imposition of 20 per cent. upon East India raw silks, which will take off the opposition of those who are concerned for our manufactures.

The present company will be able to give no obstruction, now the just and compassionate part is provided for, in allowing them three years to draw home their estates. And their forts and purchases are left them to dispose of, perhaps they may now think it their interest to strain a little and raise their own quota, or they will find their actions worth very little.

Your neighbour, Mr. How, is come to town; he made his first appearance to-day, and spoke in behalf of the company: he did not do it with that warmth, as if that were the business which brought him up: it is suspected, therefore, that something else is driving at. Perhaps it may be the getting rid of the troops that are ordered to be disbanded. The keeping of them up is a great burden upon the exchequer, since there is no allowance for it. And I believe they must be parted with at last.

There is another dormant business, that Van-Hals told me of to-day, which he says is aimed at my Lord Albemarle and Lord Orford; but I fear more particularly the latter.

A petition of one Captain Desborough is brought into the House and referred to a committee, setting forth that he commanded a ship in Captain Norris's squadron that went to Newfoundland.

He says their Commodore, Norris, took prizes to the value of 47,000*l.*, and though the King gave all they should take between the officers and seamen, yet he would account with them but for 7,000*l.*; that

they were so stuffed with prize goods, that they were in no condition to fight. And he gives that for the reason why they did not go out of St. John's harbour when they might have taken Pointis; that he disapproving of Captain Norris's behaviour, was broke by a court martial and left behind, so that he had much ado to get home, and could not reach Ireland till about two months since, or else he would have complained sooner.

By what I have observed, though I shall not tell it to any one's prejudice, Norris was pretty extraordinarily supported, when two of the ships he brought home were begged by my Lord Albemarle. And against this grant an instruction was produced from the Admiralty, which I thought pretty extraordinary, since it declares the King gave to that squadron all the plunder they should take in that expedition; which the King since explained himself, in that he could mean nothing else but the spoils upon Newfoundland, where it was then thought they would find the enemy. But the Admiralty interpreting it to prizes taken at sea, makes the instruction very irreconcileable with the act of parliament, which makes another distribution of prizes. The contest about these two ships saved me from presenting a warrant to justify that instruction, and to give all to Norris; and when the matter was accommodated, I had like to have been drawn in to procure a *nolle prosequi* for Norris against all informations. I little dreamed of what is now coming

on; but, however, I thought, in common prudence, it best to go through the ordinary forms thereof, and therefore I made him bring his petition, and referred it to Mr. Attorney for his report, which was never brought me since. And, in the meantime, a voyage was provided for Norris to the West Indies. I suppose he is now at Portsmouth waiting for a wind to go to Barbadoes with Mr. Gray.

By what is mentioned, your Grace will pretty well understand the state of this case, and if Sir Christopher Musgrave and Sir Thomas Dyke have espoused it, as I hear they have, they will make a troublesome piece of work of it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 26, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 23rd, and have moved the King in behalf of Mrs. Heyford, though she has not yet brought me her petition. His Majesty is very willing to give her the vacant pension of sixpence per diem, but is afraid it will do her no good, and he would not have her disappointed when she thinks a provision is made for her.

I understand by this that there is no settled fund for these pensions, and it is uncertain whether there will be one; but, however, I am directed to speak

to my Lord Ranelagh about it, and accordingly as he gives me encouragement, I can get this done for her, or otherwise, I hope his Majesty will otherwise consider her; but that, I am afraid, must be in a less proportion.

I know not what to make of the penny-post letter about the books. I have heard there were such things, and they have been a good while published. Perhaps they have done all the mischief they can do; however, I would seize the remainder of them if I knew where. It may be as easy to find them as the discoverer, since he gives no more notice of himself, and to put out any advertisement may not be so proper.

Whenever Peau is sent abroad, it shall no further be any act of mine, than laying it before the Council.

I have not yet subscribed for your Grace, expecting Sir Harry Farnese to carry me where the roll is kept. I suppose it may be done to-morrow, or next day. Your Grace will see by the enclosed that we are now coming to frame the bill, and the project goes on hitherto very successfully.

The old company hang off still. If they had a mind to come into it, it is hard for them to raise the money; but they may be satisfied they have not a strength to oppose it.

They mustered up all their force to-day, and Mr. Attorney came in to their assistance, and moved all the strings of compassion towards widows and or-

who had brought their all into that stock, and thought they had the parliament's approbation, since the charter was founded on the regulations they had resolved on : it was answered those were considerations which must perpetuate this company, since there would be an eternal succession of people that they should draw in ; but there was no injustice done them, the parliament allowing as much time for their dissolution (viz. three years) as was reserved by their charter.

Tremont, the Frenchman, was executed yesterday;* the court of aldermen had appeared in his behalf, but the heinousness of the crime, though he was not far dipped in it, made it hard to be remitted, and for fear of being thought partial to one of that country, there was a kind of necessity of being severe.

There has not been much done at Norris's committee, who neglect meeting. The captain has appeared before them, and given them some account. Colonel Gibson, who was with him at Newfoundland, tells me what is said in relation to Pointis is malicious and false ; as to the profit made by prizes, he can say nothing to it.

* For coining guineas.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 28, 1698.

I have engaged your Grace in the new subscription, having signed for four thousand pounds in your name. I hope we are now in prospect of a good conclusion at the session. Perhaps the East India Company may make another attempt, and make an offer at least of coming into the project upon terms. They have held a general court, and deputed their authority to their committee, which they have increased by bringing in their late members, that they had imprudently enough discarded. If their proposal should have any tendency to bring the new subscribers to incorporate with them, they will make nothing of it; but if they will be concerned, they must pay their money and stand on their bottom. Perhaps some of the subscribers would not much relish that, desiring rather to see them totally excluded; but that the house will not come up to, if they can raise their quota.

Your Grace will see by the inclosed, that a handsome provision is made for the Civil List. I have not seen the King since, but I am told that he never appeared in better humour.

We have a packet from my Lord Portland this afternoon, of the 25th instant, o. s. He talks of staying eight or ten days longer. I do not find they have any thing new to write.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 31, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 28th. I have spoke to my Lord Ranelagh about Mrs. Heyford, who is very ready to assist any one your Grace recommends, and therefore has received from the King the confirmation of his pleasure to give her the vacant pension, though he doubts it will do her but little good, more than to put her into a way of being remembered in some other manner. I find that it is not intended those pensions shall be charged on the Civil List, which is to be managed with frugality, and the establishment of the forces will less bear them. However, he thinks something may be done for her, and if I knew the officer's name, I would get the warrant despatched. I have not seen or heard from Mrs. Heyford since your Grace writ about her.

My Lord Manchester is very kind to concern himself for Mr. Stanyon, but I do not find he cares to accept of any employment at Venice if his Majesty had a mind to send a resident thither. But I believe we shall not increase the charge of foreign ministers beyond what is necessary.

Mr. How staid very little in town, his wife's illness called him away again.

There was little done in the House these two days, therefore I give no account of it. The East India Company are buzzing about among the mem-

bers, and it is expected they will come out very soon with some artificial proposal, designed only to defeat the subscription. When they do it, they will find themselves pretty roughly handled, and their old faults ripped up. It is certain we shall never know when the session will end, if we are set loose again to raise the two millions some other way.

I have not heard these two days of Norris's committee, but I suppose they meet still. The enquiry they were upon was, why Pointis was not attacked? I hear if there were a fault in it, it will not lie at Norris's door.

We had a Chapter of the Garter yesterday, and the Swedish Ambassador delivered back the late King's ensigns of the order; the Duke of Newcastle was invested with the order at the same time.

Some complaint has been brought to his Majesty against Sir Edmund Hudros,* whereupon Mr. Blathwayte has produced a letter from him, describing his revocation. It is supposed he has had it for some time, with an intention to make use of it only when it could be delayed no longer. His Majesty has thereupon given direction that a new commission and instructions be prepared for Colonel Nicholson, upon the recommendation of the Archbishop and Lord Chancellor.

My Lord Cornwallis is made Lord Lieutenant of Custos Rotalorum of Suffolk.

* This name is written so indistinctly that I am not certain that it is rightly spelled above.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 2, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 30th past. I gave your Grace an account in my last how the government of Virginia was disposed of. You have now a solicitor for that of Maryland in behalf of Colonel Dudley, who was born in Virginia. When my Lord Cutts spoke to me of it, and would have engaged my friendship, I told him it was out of my province, and would not become me to meddle; he thanked me for the hint, and now applies to your Grace. I asked him who were the competitors: he named Major Langston, but I wonder I do not see him, for he mentioned something of this formerly to me. I suppose he must be in Ireland, his brother Thom deserves to be remembered, and I think the Major has a good many friends.

Your Grace will see that a day is appointed to consider the state of the East India Company. It is hoped the frightening them with it will be sufficient. If they withdraw their obstructions the enquiry will not proceed; otherwise, we shall have all raked up, which may occasion heats and great loss of time.

The committee that sits on Molyneux's book resolved to enquire into the occasions and encouragements given for it in Ireland, which they say is chiefly pushed on by Mr. Clark, from whence some inferences are made.

They have ordered the extracts of the bills to be laid before them, which have been lately sent from Ireland. They will find some that are for confirming laws made in England, but I think the council here laid those aside. However, the attempt in Ireland will be equally, if not more censurable.

The motion yesterday, for the list of the army disbanded, and to be disbanded, was made by Sir Thomas Dyke. They say it was not intended to be carried farther, if Mr. Blathwayte had not happened to say he should be ready with the lists when he had orders for it. Upon that, Sir Christopher Musgrave said they saw now where it stuck, and therefore moved for an address. I know not whether those gentlemen will be the most forward in pursuing this matter much farther. Some suspect they are not very unwilling to make their court at other men's hazard.

The Swedish Ambassador is to have his audience of leave on Tuesday next, at Kensington.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 4, 1698.

We have not been in a committee to-day upon the East India business; but only on the bill for the double duty upon salt, which is not gone through with. They left off at the paragraph about rock salt, which will take up some debate. The salt

springs and the rock having divided interests, the advocates for the latter will press for a drawback, to enable them to work, and put them on an equal footing with the springs, or otherwise they must sit still.

The House will not go into the East India committee till Tuesday next. This is a designed delay, that if the Company will think of any accommodations in the meantime, they may have opportunities for it; there is some expectations of it, but I do not well see how it is to be done. Some would have them subscribe as a company, in such proportion as they think fit, whereby they will be incorporated with the general stock, and they will still subsist as a separate company for three years, but to no other purpose than to draw home their effects, and to receive and pay their debts; and in that case, their forts and castles shall be taken off their hands for a greater sum than they are really worth. I know not whether they will think this a sufficient regard to them, or how they can be assured of paying in their money, if they subscribe it; or what advantage it will be to them, as a company, to subscribe, since they will have no other privilege than any particular subscriber.

To remove the clamour about the injustice, Mr. Montague has proposed that the Judges should give their opinion upon the clause in the Company's charter, that reserves to the King a power of determining the charter at any time, upon giving three

years' notice. It is indeed expressed in the charter, if the King finds it unprofitable or prejudicial to himself or subjects; from whence they argue, that can't be pretended, while the trade is still kept up, and only transferred to others.

Mr. Attorney likewise argued upon that clause, that the trade could not be granted to any others during the three years, which might have had more weight, if the charter did now exclude others from that trade; but the contrary thereof was visible.

My Lord Chief Justice was with the King this day, and had directions to consult his brethren, whose opinions will be laid before his Majesty to-morrow at the Cabinet Council.

My Lord Spencer has lost his lady, who died this morning of the small-pox; her distemper was mistaken, being looked upon at first to be the cholic, which she was subject to, so that the remedies she took were very improper for her real disease.

The King has signed Mrs. Heyford's warrant.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 7, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 4th. My Lord Cutts has been asking me whether you had writ any thing about his friend Dudley. He may expect to prefer him to Maryland; but I think the King has no such intentions. There are

three competitors have appeared lately, Sir William Russell, whom my Lord Falconberg has recommended, and the whole family of the Russells are solicitors for him! But the King thinks he has no talent for this sort of business, and he considers of what consequence it is, to have governors in the plantations proper for their employments, and therefore he has civilly excused himself to Sir William. My Lord Scarborough solicits for one Colonel Blakeston, who has been in the West Indies, and both he and his father, who lives at Newcastle, are very zealous for the government. I have heard Ben Overton speak of this Thom Blakeston as a man of courage, probity, and great ingenuity, which are all qualifications very necessary for a governor. The King mentioned to me a third, named Parker; I know not who he is, or by whom recommended. It seems he has a good character given him. I suppose he has the most powerful friend, and therefore may carry it.

Your Grace will see by the enclosed account of what the House has done, that there is a prospect of an accommodation between the old company and the new subscribers; if it succeed, the two millions will be raised with greater certainty and much less clamour. I believe my Lord Godolphin and Lord Marlborough have mediated it. I do not know what the Company will propose, but I hear it will turn upon what shall be allowed them for their forts and castles; they valuing their whole stock at 50 per

cent., compute their dead stock at 20 of it, which being allowed them, they will subscribe for 700,000*l.*, and that to be received as part of their subscription; and they will pay the rest in money, and pretend only to be incorporated in the general joint stock, and their effects will be reserved to them for the payment of their debts, and to make a dividend among themselves, if there be a remainder.

It is supposed they put in more value upon their dead stock, about 100 or 150,000*l.* But for peace sake, and to make the business go on smoothly, Mr. Montague shews himself well disposed to give them more than the worth of these forts, and the principal subscribers are contented it should be so. I believe they will agree upon a medium that both shall be satisfied with.

The Emperor's envoy presses the King that an ambassador may be sent into Spain, and an envoy to Vienna, and Sir Joseph Williamson seems desirous to return from Holland. If your Grace has ever thought of persons for any of those employments, or have had any discourse with the King about such persons, you will please to let me know it.

My Lord Ranelagh had the address put into his hands about the army; he has not yet reported the King's answer, perhaps he may do it to-morrow. I suppose it is a general one, that the lists shall be delivered them. If the House will, after that, forbear calling for them, it will not be ill taken.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 7, 1698.

His Majesty has ordered a proclamation this evening for dissolving the Parliament, and declaring his intention that he will give directions to the Lord Chancellor for issuing writs to summon a Parliament to meet on the 24th of August next, so that the teste of the writ will bear date on Wednesday next; and so much time is allowed for giving notice to all parts of the kingdom, that people may avoid trespassing against the law by any expenses about elections after Tuesday next.

There is a talk as if the King would be going to Margate on Friday se'nnight. He goes on Saturday to Windsor, but will be back again on Sunday at the Cabinet Council.

I have seen my Lord Sunderland this evening, who took an occasion to wonder at the reports he meets with, as if he had a hand, or were privy to, the attacks made on Mr. Montague. He hoped that would appear too unreasonable to be charged upon him, it not being very consistent, that while the Tories were taking him to pieces, he should be doing the same thing to the Whigs.

He spoke in commendation of the gentlemen who have had the management of affairs. That nobody of sense could believe any others so fit to serve the King, or that the Tories were capable of it at all.

That now he was come to town, he should see how they could bear him, and if he was disagreeable to them, or any way obnoxious, he would return to Althorpe, and not come to town for seven years.

I can't yet make a judgment whether they will visit him or not. If they do, I hope they will grow to a better like of one another.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 7,* 1698.

I have received the honour of your Grace's letter of the 4th, and read that part of it to his Majesty which concerned yourself. His Majesty remembered the promise he made to you, that you should be eased of the Seals at the end of the session. But as he has not yet resolved into whose hands he shall put them, he hopes your Grace will not be uneasy if he do not yet remove them.

As for your being in the Commission of Justices, his Majesty refers it to your choice; but if it be left to him, he will have your name inserted, as thinking it most proper, and what will be most agreeable to those whom he shall appoint. But he does not intend it should give you the least trouble of attend-

* These three last letters bear all the same, and were undoubtedly written on the same day. The only difficulty has been the arranging them in proper order, which I have done as far as possible from the context.

ance. I am commanded to send you this by express, his Majesty being in haste to be satisfied that he shall obtain this from you.

The King asked me who I thought the Lords Justices would choose for their Secretary. I supposed they would take Mr. Yard, of course, as being in your Grace's service, and one that was very capable of the business; and the clerks in that office were all along employed before, and the Lords Justices could not well be without those conveniences. But I desired his Majesty would be pleased to speak to my Lord Chancellor about it, and know of him who he thought fittest to serve them, that the recommendation might arise from his Lordship, who was the best judge of those who should attend them.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 9, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 6th, and have laid the inclosed before his Majesty, who had before taken a resolution that Dudley should not have that government, having heard but an indifferent character of him.

My Lord Cutts had put into the King's hands this morning, before I came to Kensington, the letter your Grace writ to him. I was ordered to return it him, he desiring to have it again. I told him at the same time I found his Majesty was engaged, though I could not tell to whom.

He acknowledges your Grace's great civility to him, and compares it with the different behaviour of some from whom he says, he had more reason to expect a kinder usage. I know not who they are he would reflect on; but I think the person he recommends is none of the fittest, and those employments at least should not be carried by the dint of solicitation only.

I hope matters are accommodable with the East India Company, as your Grace will judge by what passed to-day, though Sir Josiah Child's party of old members seem resolved to stand it out. I am afraid they know the ill condition they have brought their affairs into, and that they have not effects to answer their debts; and therefore they would be glad to lay their ruin upon a wrong cause. Sir Joseph Hern is broke loose from them, and is a stickler for bringing them into subscribe, for which he tells me he is called a betrayer of the rights and interests of the company. Sir John Fleet and B. join with him, and if they increase their party, as it is probable, by all who have been imposed on by the old company, they will be a great majority.

My Lord Manchester was sworn this evening of the Council.

We have had no letters this week from my Lord Portland, but we suppose he went from Paris yesterday to Chantilly, where he intended to stay two days. It is expected he will be at Calais on Sunday next.

My Lord Ranelagh has not yet made his report about the army. He stays till this East India business is put out of danger.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 11, 1698.

The enclosed will inform your Grace what a tricking proposal has been made by the East India Company, and I hear they have resolved again at a general court held this day, that they will not come into the subscription any other way than by opening their books and being engrafted upon. They would have dealt much more ingenuously by sticking to their first declaration, that it was not possible for them to raise 700,000*l.*, since they are assured nobody will venture upon their rotten foundation.

I hear they talk of keeping their forts during the three years, and carry on their trade for that term. I suppose they think this will put a damp upon the subscriptions, but they may be mistaken. Mr. Montague charges them to have dealt deceitfully, three-fifths of their committee having undertaken for an accommodation. Mr. Dodington was one of the managers of it, but as soon as he saw their general court fly from it, he immediately sold his stock, and will have no more to do with them.

Aubrey Price was tried yesterday at the Old Bai-

ley, and found guilty in counterfeiting exchequer bills.

Monsieur de Bassy was acquitted upon his indictment for coming out of France without leave. The point that brought him off was his being sent away by order of council, from whence it was argued that he did not go voluntarily into France. He might have had another indictment laid upon him, for being in arms in Ireland; but that Mr. Baker omitted. I saw the order of council by which he was sent away, and find O'Hon's name in it, with some others. I mention it because your Grace had some remembrance of it, and Mr. Bridgeman pretended to search the council books, and said there was no such order.

I hear my Lord Marlborough is to be of the Cabinet Council; he will be a very fit man to be one of the Lords Justices, there being a want of such. My Lord Orford thinks of being in the country most of the summer.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 12, 1698.

I laid your Grace's answer before the King. His Majesty will avoid pressing any thing upon you that may make you uneasy, and therefore your name is not to be inserted in the commission of justices. But he does not think it fit to break up that office,

since he has not yet resolved to whom he will give it; and the continuance of it is necessary, as well for the service of the Lords Justices, as for the entertaining and supporting the correspondences that belong to it. And therefore he hopes you will not think it any imposition upon you, if the Seals lie till he sends for them.

I believe your Grace will not apprehend that it will continue thus long. I am very much mistaken if your friends will not be pressing to have another secretary; and perhaps the obstructions it has met with hitherto will lessen every day.

My Lord Sunderland was with me this morning (to whom I made your Grace's compliment, and it was very kindly taken). He tells me that he thinks of nothing but going to Althorpe, and setting up his rest there. The King has endeavoured to make an accommodation, but he is told his service would suffer so much in it, that upon that consideration it must be let alone. He bears it with more calmness than I thought he would, and desires that it may be no otherwise taken notice of in the world, than that he came to pay his respects to the King upon his going abroad, and to see his friends, resolving to return in a fortnight. There is an end of any expectations that their friendship can ever be renewed, and it is only to be thought, that all acts of unkindness may be forborne, which he professes himself to be disposed to.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 14, 1698.

The King declared on Sunday last, at the Cabinet Council, that he had appointed my Lord Marlborough to be Governor of the Duke of Gloucester, and that he would appoint a committee to settle his family.

June 16, 1698.

The Cabinet Council did not meet this evening, there being very little business on the paper, otherwise my Lord Marlborough would have been sworn this evening. I thought it might be most acceptable to be sworn on Sunday, and to be admitted of the Cabinet Council at the same time, which his Majesty has approved of.

The Lords refusing to give the House of Commons the necessary conveniences they ask, for prosecuting their impeachments, is like to breed very ill blood. And the manner of refusing it shews such a contempt, that it is like to raise great resentments; and this disregard to another may very soon make a fatal breach.

My Lord Rochester and my Lord Peterborough stand very stiff upon the prerogative of the Peers. My Lord Steward appeared the first for having some consideration for the House of Commons, and my Lord Normanby inclined to him. My Lord Stam-

ford and Lord Haversham joined them. The Lords are driving at another point, which the King may be more sensible of.

They are mustering up a strength to throw out the Poll Bill for the sake of a clause that abridges them from saving* themselves, though it has passed otherwise in other bills.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 18, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's of the 15th. We are not yet out of our entanglements with the East India Company, but I suppose we shall know what we have to trust to on Monday. It looks as if the company were providing how to explain their proposal about raising the two millions. If they give any clear demonstration of it, I don't know but it may puzzle the cause. The danger of putting it to trial is, that if they fail, the subscribers may show cool, when they see the testy party preferred before them.

I acquainted your Grace in my last, that I had spoke to the King about Mr. Walsh. I had not then the opportunity of your letter to him as I have done since; and he likes the character your Grace gives of Mr. Walsh so well, that I believe he will be employed when occasion serves.

* Thus written.

I had a letter from Sir Joseph Williamson this morning, wherein he seems desirous to continue abroad till the winter, which his Majesty is willing to gratify him in. My Lord Orford told me, the other day, he heard a Secretary would be shortly appointed, but could not tell who it was; for my part, I see no great likelihood of it. We are pretty near the end of the session, and Mr. Keen tells me it will not be many days before the King goes for Holland.

I incline to believe that the Seals will still be left in your Grace's hands; and if so, I think you ought to be in the Commission of Justices, which will not oblige you to any attendance, if you find it inconvenient.

Mr. Attorney tells me that Price's *petition* will end in a petition to his Majesty for transportation. That will be seen to-morrow, when the Recorder attends with an account of the sessions. For my part, I have nothing to oppose against his being transported, if the Treasury shall be satisfied; but I think his washing of bills should be looked upon as more dangerous, and of worse consequences, than Fremont's washing of guineas.

There is a report in town that my Lady Carlisle has surprised her husband with the Lady Anne Popham at the old Lady Howard's lodgings.

It is supposed that my Lord Portland may have landed to-day at Dover.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 21, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 18th. What you writ about Mr. Walsh was not liable to be misunderstood, and I proposed it no otherwise to the King when I first mentioned it. And I have acquainted your Grace that I afterwards read your letter to him, which I hope will have its effect in due time. If your Grace would bring it to an issue, and are satisfied such an employment would be acceptable to Mr. Walsh, you will either take notice of it yourself to my Lord Chancellor, or direct me to do it. You having mentioned in your letter, that he was known to my Lord Chancellor, it cannot but be of service to Mr. Walsh if his Lordship joins in the character your Grace has given of him, and I believe my Lord will be willing to do him so good an office.

I wish the Duke of Florence be not so very civil to put a better colour upon the ill-treatment Plowman meets with, who is condemned since the signing of the civil * to pay 47,000 dollars in satisfaction to the French for their losses. He has represented, that by the third article of the treaty of Ryswick, all injuries and damages are to be forgot on both sides, and therefore he ought to have the benefit of it;

* So written.

but the Duke is overawed by the French not to reverse or mitigate his sentence. His Majesty will write to him again to let him know what alterations the peace has made as to French pretensions, and if the difficulty still remains, we shall make use of it as a demand upon France, in answer to many they bring upon us in matters of much less consequence.

I have acquainted the King with Captain Cockle's case, who would be glad it might be retrievable, and I have orders to speak with Mr. Blathwayte about it.

His Majesty is of your Grace's opinion, that this is the proper time to make all necessary enquiries into the ports and fortifications on the French coast, and I believe he will take it into consideration.

I have directions to shew the Archbishop of Canterbury that part of your letter which concerns the Bishoprick of Worcester. I hope to do it before next post.

The Lords were upon the poll-bill to-day; I suppose it is passed danger, since I hear nothing to the contrary.

We shall not know till to-morrow what will become of the East India Company: their court does not meet till then. I think nobody expects they will undertake the subscription upon the terms of the bill, which leaves the trade fast or loose, at the will of the subscribers; and I do not see how the money can be raised, but upon the presumption that there shall be a joint stock exclusive of all others, which yet the bill has not provided for.

My Lord Marlborough took his place at the Cabinet last Sunday, and was then sworn of the Council.

My Lord Portland arrived the same evening, and has been very much with the King since; he dined with him this day at my Lord Ranelagh's. I hear my Lord Sunderland intends to be in town within a fortnight.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 23, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 20th. As to the query about Mr. Thymbleby, I think the act against corresponding with King James, takes no notice of the accidental conversations he mentions. And if he goes no further, it will be no more criminal in him, than it was in my Lord James Cavendish, who happened to dine with the Duke of Berwick at Count Grammont's, where the Duke owned to him he came over to stir up rebellion; but knew nothing of the assassination. If he made a visit to the late King or Queen, the case would be otherwise, or if he sent them advices by any other hand, or assisted them with money, or brought messages from them, which I believe will be offences against the law, as far as they are proved. Considering his circumstances, and acquaintance abroad, there is one thing I cannot so well approve

of, that he talks of going over first himself to choose a place to settle, and then comes back to carry over his family. There may be room for suspicion in his going thus backward and forward, when one does not see any great reason for it. The removing with his family at once would be taken less notice of, and it does not seem to be so difficult to resolve whether to go or not to France, and one may as well be satisfied of one's accommodation by letter, as by a journey.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 25, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 22d. What I writ to your Grace about the Commission of Justices, was of myself, and without any one's privity. I thought it necessary to counsel you against the case might happen.

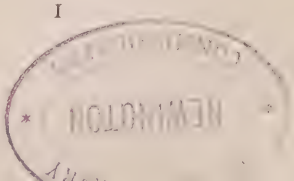
I see your present inclinations carry you to ease and retirement; but those may change, and you grow young again. If you cannot get rid of the seals when you would, it will be but the same submission that your name is inserted in the commission. One has but a natural consequence on the other, and will serve at least to fill up the number,—if it be thought fit to keep out any incommodious pretender. I believe Mr. Stanhope has had that discourse held with him, and Count d'Aversperg*

* I leave this name as I find it written.

has given the occasion of it, who longs to get an ambassador sent to Madrid, and has been sifting and prying who is likely to be the man. But the King is not in the same haste they are. The affair of Shonenberg, ——* still through their own fault and pride. They would have the interdict first taken off here, at least that a day should be fixed when it should be done on both sides; but the King likes neither of the proposals, and insists that they should first recall their orders who first laid them. He thinks it so peculiarly the interest of the Imperialists to have the correspondence opened, that if they have any credit in the Court of Spain, they will get it done; and if they have not, a minister of his Majesty that should appear for them, will make so slender a figure, that there needs no haste of appointing him. This has been lately signified to the Count d'Aversberg, so that it will be nearly two months before an answer can come, and he doubts it will not then be a satisfactory one, the Spaniards not easily departing from their punctilios.

In that time it is very likely the King will be in Holland, though I hear no mention made of the journey; but what comes from beyond sea, where I find he is expected. He does not much like the delay we are threatened with by reason of the impeachments. The Lords ordered yesterday, that the trials shall be in Westminster Hall. Sir Christopher Wren acquainting them that the scaffolds

* A word undecipherable; probably *rests* or *rankles*.



may be erected in eight or ten days. The Lord Great Chamberlain attended his Majesty immediately with the Lords address, and brought a warrant for the court to be erected, which his Majesty has signed to-day, being advised against any appearance of delay on his side. There being yet a probability, that when the Houses see the scaffolds cannot be erected so soon, and that the trial is like to be tedious, if eight men* shall desire to be tried separately, they will fall upon some expedient that may put off the trials till winter, which would be most grateful to the King, who desires not to be insensibly engaged to expect a long issue.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 28, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 25th, and shall lay the inclosed from the Duke of Florence before his Majesty. The expressions are full of kindness and respect, and there wants nothing but a little of his equity, and that he be not turned from it, by a dread of France.

The Lords read the two million bill yesterday. My Lord Berkeley then presented a petition from the Company, and their hearing is appointed on Thursday; there was no need of so long a delay,

* Eight men who had been engaged in smuggling to France during the war.

since the cause has been argued so lately; but I think some Lords had a mind to manage the time that the impeachments might not be defered; but that too was unnecessary, since the parties have now pleaded guilty. I am not yet informed why Longueville has not done it, as well as the rest. I know when he was taken up last summer, he always maintained to the Lords Justices, that though he had been in partnership with Gondet,* he never was concerned in the silk trade.

I refer your Grace to the votes for the resolutions that were taken yesterday, upon the report about Molyneuxs' book;† there were some reflections; made upon Mr. Methuen for putting the seal to bills that were derogatory to the rights of the Crown of England.

Great notice has been taken in what numbers the Roman Catholics resort to the chapels of the foreign ministers, insomuch that it was grown a publick offence and scandal, that the laws were so openly affronted. His Majesty found himself obliged to apply some remedy for preventing great inconveniences, and accordingly I was directed to go to all the foreign ministers of the Romish persuasion, to know what was the number of their chaplains, and what countrymen they were; and to let them understand his Majesty found it necessary to take some course for preventing that resort to their

* Written elsewhere Gondel.

† Upon the Independance of Ireland.

chapels; but in such a manner as their privileges should be untouched; and to give them notice, that if any of his Majesty's subjects were entertained by them as their Chaplains, they should dismiss them, the law not allowing them to perform the functions of priests in England.

When I delivered them the message, they pretended to be surprised, as if it were an innovation, though the same thing was signified to them within these three years, immediately after the assassination plot was discovered, and the like was done by King Charles in 1678, and the messengers were then sent to observe the Roman Catholics who went to the Popish chapels, and seized them coming out. The foreign ministers having taken so little notice of the former intimations given them, creates a necessity for renewing them. Since they have no other chaplains now but what are English or Irish, except one aumonier, that some of them brought with them, and the number in some of those houses is very extraordinary The Portugal Envoy alone has ten chaplains, and nine of them are his Majesty's subjects. Count d'Aversberg, and Monsieur Hoffman, have four a piece, and none of them foreigners. The French and Spanish Ambassadors have six each, and but three foreigners between them. They know very well how intolerable this would be, and how severely resented in their countries, and yet we must expect they will blow up a noise of persecution; when, if it were considered aright, it is their

indiscretion and disregard to our laws, that raises a clamour in our own people against the remissness of the government. And all that is intended is to make the Papists sensible that the way to preserve the indulgence used towards them, is by making a moderate and discreet use of it.

The Archbishop has lately spoke to me again about the Dean of Worcester; he mentions him with kindness and esteem, and says he will well consider the case when it happens. I hope, at least, he may come into the order upon some removes that will be made. He says the Foleys were pressing to bring the Bishop of Bristol to Worcester; but he thinks him very inactive, and too bookish. I told him I thought Dr. Talbot would not leave his deanery for that bishoprick, and he seemed to be of the same opinion.

I hear Longueville intends to plead guilty to-morrow, and then Sir Christopher Wren will stay his workmen, otherwise all would have been ready by Monday.

My Lord Sunderland, I hear, will be in town next week.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 30, 1698.

The enclosed will acquaint your Grace how the business of the session advances. I suppose it will not end till Tuesday or Wednesday next. I think

Longueville intends to stand his trial: they are working still upon the scaffolds, and will have the court ready by Monday.

The examination taken up by the Lords against Sheppard is thought to be aimed at Mr. Montague, as if the advice came from him; but it appeared a groundless clamour.

There are expectations that a new parliament will be called soon after this rises, and that when the writs are issued, his Majesty will be going for Holland.

Thom Foley and Mr. Harley both spoke to me to desire your Grace, in their names, that if you did not think fit to promote Mr. Foley's election for Knight of the Shire for the County of Worcester, at least you would not appear against him. They hear of a meeting that is to be on Tuesday next at Worcester, where your Grace is to take some oaths, and he finds it is in your Grace's power to do him a great deal of good or hurt.

I suppose he has had some intimation that your Grace is otherwise inclined; or otherwise, Mr. Harley would have hardly brought it out in his soft dry way, that he was confident your Grace would not concern yourself in elections. Mr. Foley desired I should remark to your Grace, that he has stuck by the court and divided from his relations, in all votes of consequence, and particularly for supplies, which I think is true, and that nobody is in greater advance to the loan.

Harley told me privately that Mr. Foley had been with my Lord C—— to bespeak his kindness; that at first he waived interposing any way, but when he told his Lordship that if he was not sure of the county, he must oppose Mr. Cox at Droitwich, he promised he would write in his behalf.

The Lords sitting so late, there has been no council this evening, so that nothing more has been done about priests or Roman Catholics. I hear they have taken the alarm thoroughly, and if it keeps them within bounds of discretion, the consequences may not be so dreadful as they are imagined at present.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 2, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 29th past. I have not yet had an opportunity of laying that part of it before the King which concerns the Seals and the Commission of Justices. But I have mentioned it to him, and he giving me no answer to it, when I attend him with papers, I shall take that along with me. But if I find him unresolved I shall easily submit, and would rather beg your Grace's pardon for the omission than press any thing of that kind.

My Lord Sunderland, I hear, is expected in town

on Thursday next. If there be any scheme intended, I suppose it will stay till then. As for any reconciliation, I see no prospect of it. My Lord Sunderland, I am told, keeps to his declarations, that he will never meddle in business unless it be in concert with the Whigs. I believe, if their inclinations were more disposed to an accommodation, they would think this an improper time for it, when they are going to new elections, they will be shy of doing any thing they think may not be generally agreeable. We shall see in what manner they will live with him, when he is upon the place.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 5, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 2d instant. I had an opportunity yesterday to read to the King your former letter about the Seals, but he has not yet declared what he will do in that matter. Perhaps we may hear more of it when my Lord Sunderland comes to town, who will be here on Thursday. I do not hear any body much talked of for that employment; but I am told my Lord Sunderland is very inclinable to my Lord Tankerville, and that his credit and interest is as firm as ever. But I see no use in declaring any one just upon the King's going over, unless it were to ease

and gratify your Grace; but the Seals lying in the summer where they did in the winter will have nothing to be remarked upon, and I think the office ought to be kept up for the services of the Lords Justices.

I know not what to make of Sir James Houblon's correspondent in relation to the Italian Count. It was but an odd information from the beginning; but when the life of the King is in the case, attention must be given against even probabilities. And Sir James, that brought the advice out of zeal, would have thought it a great neglect not to be taken notice of, and therefore I suppose your Grace encouraged him to proceed, and whether this 150*l.* has been laid out or not, since it is demanded upon such a pretence, I believe it must be paid. For ought I see Sir James Houblon may expect that this charge be continued as long as Boazell lives, and as much longer as they please to keep him alive. But as your Grace is seeking to get rid of the Seals, I think it is hardly worth while for to be satisfied what period they would set to the dogging this man; but even leave it to be enquired after by your Grace's successor, and if they go on in the meantime with their unintelligible diligence, let them take their own way.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 9, 1698.

I was very sorry to find in a letter of Mr. Phillips', that your Grace was taken with a pain in your knee; but if you must be out of order, one way or other, the lower the better.

The King is gone this day to Windsor, and will return to-morrow to be at the Cabinet Council. He asked me yesterday, whether I had sent an express to your Grace to desire the Seals may lie some time longer in your hands. You will judge from thence how earnest he is in it, and I hope he may depend upon your gratifying him in a thing that I cannot but think reasonable, since he is yet unresolved. This looks like a very critical conjuncture. My Lord Sunderland is come to town, and I believe his Majesty would be very glad an accommodation might be made. But I hear none of the leading men have been to visit him, except my Lord Orford, that called at his house when he was from home. I suppose they have met this afternoon, my Lord Sunderland being very desirous of an opportunity to make himself rightly understood, and that it has been far from his thoughts to do any of them the prejudices he finds himself charged with. And after that, it must be left to them, whether they will enter into any friendship with him or not; and if they shew any aversion to it, he seems resolved to

return to Althorpe, and never to be concerned in business, but with them and by their good liking. How this will be accepted I know not, but if your Grace were here, I believe you would give your advice for uniting, if it could be done on safe terms, which I am inclined to believe, as I do further that it would be most agreeable to the King, and fix him unalterably in an interest that is most capable to support the government.

* I am told that Mr. Montague has made a visit to my Lord Sunderland, and was with him for some time in private discourse.

It is the general discourse that the King will be going this day sennight. In the meantime, I hear nothing of any changes to be made or places to be disposed of, though I see a large band of solicitors, who look as if they depended on promises that had been made them, when the parliament was sitting. I know not whether the King will not turn his back before he comes to any declarations on this head, or that the uncertainty of an accommodation leaves this likewise in suspence.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 13, 1698.

I have a new occasion now of sending another messenger to you, by the King's command, who was

* This seems to have been written at a later hour.

pleased to tell me this morning, that he found it necessary, considering the state of the King of Spain's health, and how much the interest of England was concerned in the affairs of that kingdom, to send an Ambassador Extraordinary thither. And his Majesty remembering your Grace had once thoughts of going into a warmer climate, if you are still of that mind, he wishes you would take this character upon you, which he is persuaded you may discharge without any uneasiness to yourself, more than undergoing the journey. And, as it may contribute to your health, it would be of the greatest advantage to his service, if matters of such moment could be committed to your management. He desires, therefore, you will consider it, and let him know whether you are willing to undertake it. In which case, he would not press you to be going sooner than you may find it convenient.

The Duke of Gloucester's family is going to be established, and the Bishop of Salisbury is come up upon it, who appears a most deserted mourner. His Majesty, being very intent upon good husbandry till he gets out of debt, as to his Civil List, begins this establishment with a retrenchment, and thinks of allowing no more, at present, than 15,000*l.* per annum.*

* The intention of Parliament was evidently to allow infinitely more.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 14, 1698.

I have been at Mercer's chapel this afternoon, and have subscribed for your Grace and myself, and paid the first payment. You will see the terms of it in the inclosed paper: they opened the books about one o'clock, the commission not being put under the seal sooner; and by five, when I came thither, above 300,000*l.* had been subscribed, and they did not doubt, but it would reach 500,000*l.* this evening. I found the commissioners very cheerful, the subscribers going on faster than they imagined.

The East India Company have held a general court, where it was resolved to leave it to their committee of fifty, whether they should subscribe or not: they are making proposals about it, and begin with a demand that 300,000*l.* be allowed them for their dead stock. I do not find the subscribers intend to purchase them at that rate, but rather hope to complete the sum without them.

Mr. Attorney did not sign the bill for the commission, but went to Peckham, and left it locked up in his study. There was great difficulty to get his clerk to deliver it, till the fees were paid and laid down, amounting to above 200*l.*, and then it was carried to the Solicitor to be signed. If it had been

the Attorney's draught, more might be said for it; but that was done by Mr. Lowndes.

There lay another roll upon the subscription table for those who were willing to be incorporated: to the time I was there all had signed it. I suppose they go on still in the same manner.

It was generally reported this morning, that the commission of excise had been altered overnight, and four new names put in it, viz. Mr. Montague, Norris, Riley, and Fleming. The four said to be put out are Parry, Strong, Foche, and Evans; but I since hear nothing yet has been resolved in it. So much is true, that the Treasury either have, or are directed to give in the names of such as may be fit to serve in that commission.

The King has declared he will be going on Tuesday next; a council will be held on Saturday, when the Justices will be declared. My Lord Marlborough and Mr. Montague are the two new ones.

The writs for the Parliament were sealed yesterday. Our election at Westminster will be next week. Bonithon, the steward, desists from standing, but Sir Harry Colt holds it out; I do not see what encouragement he has for it. But his obstinacy, I believe, will give us the trouble of a poll, though the numbers be never so unequal. He rails at courtiers, and sets up for a national interest till he makes it a jest.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 16, 1698.

I have received the honour of your Grace's letters of the 13th and 15th. Hayward brought the former last night; and a council being held this morning, I could only acquaint the King, in short, that your Grace acquiesced in what he would have done as to leaving the seals at present in your hands. His Majesty is very well satisfied with it, and will think of putting you at ease, when he returns from beyond sea. He asked me, at the same time, whether I had an answer to the other letter, but that arriving late this evening, I shall give him an account of it to-morrow. When his Majesty ordered me to write, he was in some doubt whether you would accept the employment, though he very much wished it, and knows not where to place it near so well. The King acquainted my Lord Chancellor with it soon after, and he had a great mind to have writ to your Grace to persuade you to this journey; and was restrained only lest he should be thought to advise any thing that you were averse to, and might prove prejudicial to your health, though he hoped you might have been benefited by the change of the climate; and it would have given general satisfaction to have seen affairs of such consequence put into your hands. Disability by want of health is an irresistible excuse for not going, but it will not be allowed for so good

reason, that the public must not be served; because there are malicious, ill-natured men among us, that carp at every thing, besides those that fasten upon the present ministers. And none are so safe as those that are at a distance. Among other satisfactions his Majesty had in this choice, he thought your Grace would be so well supported at home, that your negotiation would have had all the success imaginable, and my Lord Chancellor believed you would have taken Mr. Walsh with you as Secretary of the Embassy, who with Mr. Stanhope might have taken off all the trouble and some part of the business, and the retired way of that court would have cut off a great deal of impertinence, that is unavoidable elsewhere. And you might be as much at leisure for the gout at Madrid as you are at Grafton, and be in much less danger of spitting blood.

I have another matter to acquaint your Grace with by my Lord Chancellor's direction. It has been taken notice of for some time, that the independent congregations have formed themselves into a fraternity, begun at first for the management of their own societies; and they have since enlarged themselves by the addition of some others, who have associated with them under the pretence of a reformation of manners.* They have appointed a general

* Parliament addressed the King during this session on the immoral and irreligious state of the nation. Dr. Bray laid the foundation of a society for propagating the Gospel in foreign parts, and a society was also formed for the suppression of vice.

meeting, and there are besides several private cabals, and many discontented persons of all persuasions are endeavouring to herd among them.

My Lord Archbishop apprehends their design may be to undermine the church, and my Lord Chancellor thinks they rather aim at discrediting the administration, which they represent as atheistical, and designing to drive Christianity out of the world.

The King, being acquainted of this growing sect, thinks it is of great consequence to have all their proceedings observed. My Lord Chancellor is for finding out all ways of getting into their secret, and in the same clandestine manner to work against them*, that if it were possible they might be defeated without noise. Among other instruments proper for this purpose, he thinks good use might be made of Mr. Griffith, the independent minister, both as your Grace has a good influence over him, and as he is looked upon to be a man of probity, who, however he may be zealous in his way, would not knowingly admit of a mixture, that under specious pretences should be labouring to subvert the government.

His Lordship thinks your Grace might engage him to be watchful in this matter, and to communicate to my Lord Chancellor, or to me, if he thinks that would be least taken notice of, what he observes of these designs. He need not be shy of opening himself as to the innocent part of it, which may con-

* This was the *great* Lord Somers.

cern their own congregations only; for that giving no jealousy to the government, will not be made use of to create them any disturbance; but the thing we would know is, what discontented churchmen or discarded statesmen mean by insinuating themselves into their familiarities. My Lord Chancellor believes he would choose rather to see me; that his service, if he will do any, may be less observable; but if he likes going to my Lord Chancellor better, he will contrive their meeting. There will be some other ways likewise taken to come at the bottom of this machination.

The council met this morning, and the Justices were declared. My Lord Marlborough and Mr. Montague were inserted in the place of your Grace and my Lord Sunderland. So the number is still nine.

His Majesty holds his resolution to go on Tuesday next. My Lord Sunderland was with him last night for some time, and took his leave of him then. I hear he is a little dejected upon it. He told me he would write to your Grace before he left town.

The subscriptions have succeeded beyond all imagination: the whole sum is now writ except 50,000*l.*, which many were ready to do, and a much greater sum. But this, I think, is reserved for some friends, who are gone into the country about their elections.

The East India Company subscribed yesterday 315,000*l.*, in the name of their treasurer Du Bois,

but did not sign the roll for being incorporated. This is the sum they value their forts at. They either design to accommodate with the other subscribers, or to trade separately. Sir James Houblon and Sir Robert Rich did likewise subscribe, without signing the roll; but they say they will not hold out. Mr. Montague and Mr. Smith, the great champions against a monopoly, signed both.

The Westminster election is to be on Friday. I think Sir Harry has little to expect, though he has courted some of the rabble; but he is obstinate enough to stand a poll.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 19, 1698.

I have acquainted your Grace with the receipt of your letters by the two messengers, and had an opportunity on Sunday to lay them before the King, who will not press any further your going into Spain, since you do not find yourself disposed or well enough for such a journey.

That evening his Majesty spoke to my Lord Chancellor, that he should propose this embassy to my Lord Wharton. His Majesty thinking it absolutely necessary not only to have one of abilities in that employment, but also such a one as may give weight

to his negotiations, and satisfy the nation in the result of it.

My Lord Chancellor writes to him to-night about it; but he is doubtful how the proposition will be received.

As to what your Grace writes about being discharged of the Seals some-time before the sitting of parliament, his Majesty thinks of sending for the Seals at his return. But if you think that may be too near the opening of the parliament, he would not have you uneasy on that account; and therefore leaves it to you to order the Seals to be delivered sooner, if you think fit.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 21st, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 18th, and shall communicate it to the Lord Chancellor as soon as I have an opportunity. I hope he will recommend Mr. Griffith's son, but the effects of it are not to be expected till winter.

I do not doubt but it is intended the parliament shall be prorogued by proclamation, there being such a power put into the commission of the Lords Justices, that they may prorogue them either before or after their meeting. If any thing alters that intention, it must be the death of the King of Spain,

which I hope is not so near; but whenever it happens, it will require speedy and vigorous resolutions.

I have been talking with Mr. Owen, whom your Grace knows to be considerable among the Dissenters, and enquired of him at a distance, if there were any societies formed for the reformation of manners? He told me there was one, that had subsisted these seven or eight years, but had met with discouragement from the late commissioners of the Great Seal.

I suppose the meaning of that must be, that these zealots applied to them, that some whom they thought loose in their morals, and not fitted to carry on the work of reformation, might be put out of the commission of the peace. But the commissioners did not think fit to affront men for what they called want of grace.

He says these gentlemen have still their meetings, and that there are about fifty or sixty of them. I would not show so great prying as to ask their names, and he did not tell me any of them; but I perceive the business he is driving at, at present, is the more easy conviction of those who are guilty of swearing. He would have a justice of peace levy a fine in that case, without sending for the party accused, or letting him know who is the informer, which he says would be only to expose that sort of men to be knocked at the head.

He doubts whether this will be allowed to be according to the received rules of law, that provides

no man shall be condemned unheard, and that the party may expect to have his accuser face to face; but he thinks it justifiable by the prerogative of the King of Heaven, whose honour ought to be vindicated by extraordinary methods. He seems resolved to make the trial of it, and so go on till he finds it disapproved by the courts at Westminster.

But your Grace will easily imagine that such an inquisition will not be borne in this kingdom, let the pretence be what it will.

He thinks there are not above three or four Justices that would join with him, and the rest are remiss and dissolute, and perhaps fitter to be removed than continued.

I find these reformers are people of all persuasions, as well churchmen as dissenters, so that it is not the interest of any particular sect they would promote, but the general good of mankind, by introducing a conformity of manners and a primitive purity. This is a pretty temper to be worked upon if designing persons get amongst them, and if they grow to any strength. I know not what models they may have for establishing saintship. I am inclined to be of opinion that this may be a way to set up hypocrisy, but will not much advance real honesty or virtue, and when men have run through the circle of severities that are almost inseparable from a sudden reformation, they will return to a natural state of being, as good or as bad as they please.

The King got to Margate about ten on Tuesday,

and went immediately on board, but it growing calm, he came ashore again, and lay at Captain Ball's. He went on board again the next morning at ten, and set sail with a fair wind, and I do not doubt, therefore, he is now in Holland.

The Earl of Albermarle is still here, not finding himself as yet well enough to undertake the voyage, but he talks of going in two or three days.

To-morrow we come to our trial of skill with Sir Harry Colt: he has used such mean solicitations to all sorts of people, that they say he has picked up some number of the rabble. I do not think there are any apprehensions he can carry it; but he is resolved to give us the trouble of a poll, and that may fix us upon a bench for eight or ten days together, which is not very consistent with the business which each of us have upon our hands. But besides, it will be a little incongruous to have such a trouble given to one of the Lords Justices.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 23, 1698.

I have received the honour of your Grace's letters for Mr. Griffith, the father and son. I would be ashamed to say I have not read them yet; but your Grace can hardly imagine what fatigue there is in an election at Westminster, and especially when one has to do with so obstinate a creature as Sir Harry Colt.

We had a mighty appearance against him in the field, both of horse and foot, who run down his men at a strange rate, and cudgelled him into ditches full of water, and yet we say they were the aggressors.

Notwithstanding this, Sir Harry demanded the poll, and I believe he was glad his fellows were banged, that he might have a pretence to petition the house. We went immediately to the poll, which lasted till seven at night. I must say, that for Sir Harry, there was never more industry, nor more artifices used to carry his point; and I know not what would have been the event if he had either been beloved or esteemed, or kept up any reputation among the civilised part of mankind. He has his rabble under such discipline that almost every one of them polls for him singly, and his sparks being on foot had the advantage of being first at the place where the poll was taken, while the horsemen were all obliged to go home, and thought no more of it for that day; by these means he thought he had got a great victory. When the poll was cast up that night—

For Sir Harry	222
For Mr. Montague	189
And for myself	171

But he has received a check to-day; the poll when we adjourned at dinner-time running—

For Mr. Montague	501
For me	487
For Sir Harry	292

The poll since dinner was—

For Mr. Montague	242
For myself	239
For Sir Harry	186

So that, as it now stands, Mr. Montague is about 35 before me, and I have 197 voices more than Sir Harry, and if night had not come on, the inequality would have been greater. To say the truth, he has such a mob that any one but he would be ashamed to be chosen by them. He has not one gentleman in his list, but has picked up the very scum of the town,—victuallers, porters, and chairmen. Patch, your Grace's footman, was one of his voters, and stated himself gentleman. He has collected all the papists; two of them, being notorious ones, were caught, and the oaths tendered them, as the asseveration act directs, which they refusing, were hissed off.

If I did not answer your Grace's expectation in my first letter, I hope you were better satisfied with the second, and do not think there is any occasion for parting with the seals abruptly, after you have had so much patience with them. We have no news of the King's landing, but I suppose it will come to-morrow.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 26, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 23rd. But can make but short answers, while Sir Harry Colt keeps one in Westminster-hall twelve or thirteen hours a-day. I know not what he will get by it, for the odds run against him, as will appear by the inclosed. But I think he intends to tire one to death; there is no end of his obstinacy, he taking such a pride to see himself at the head of the mob.

I have read your Grace's letter to Mr. Griffith, and it will do the business, if I had time to shew it to my Lord Chancellor, and be enabled by him to say something to young Griffith that he may depend upon. I shall be out of countenance to make promises, if I have not a prospect they will have effect. I know nothing that can be given him, if the treasury do not contrive and propose it, and as my Lord Chancellor's influence is great there, while I keep the letter in my hands, and the service is depending, something may be done.

If I had seen my Lord Chancellor perhaps I might have known whether my Lord Wharton accepts the embassy to Spain.

I do not doubt but Mr. Yard gives you an account that the Lords Justices have met, and what elections are made. For my own part, I am so far put out of the way, that I know nothing and can think of nothing.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 28, 1698.

We are at last disentangled from Sir Harry Colt's intolerable vexations, who I think never intended to give over polling as long as a man would come up for him, let the inequality have been ever so great.

But, by good luck yesterday, a little before noon, the votes of all present were spent. We took the occasion to call for the three proclamations to be made, and he would have us adjourn till the afternoon to give him time to recruit. But we insisted that if there were no more to poll, we might make an end, and accordingly proclamation was made, and the bailiff declared he would allow five minutes between each proclamation. But Sir Harry eluded it for near an hour by picking up one man and then another to come in at the second proclamation; and his servant had got five or six together, whom he let loose upon us man by man, which the high-bailiff perceiving, he made them poll all together. And none appearing after another proclamation, he shut up the books; all the justices who were present crying shame of the tricks they saw played to gain time. The bailiff had the books cast up that night, and the totals were—

For Mr. Montague	2836
For me	2662
For Sir H. Colt	2026

Whereupon he declared the election that night in Westminster-hall, and this day he published it in

other parts of the Liberty. Mr. Montague was not present at the conclusion, his lady dying that night, and he went to my Lord Ranelagh's at Chelsea for a few days.

Sir Harry threatens to bring a petition, but I am sure he can do nothing worse to us than the severe attendance he has tied us to.

Mr. Wright has brought me a bill for 4,000 guilders, which I shall send to-morrow to Monsieur Jurieu, and he has likewise paid me your Grace's first payment of the subscription. It seems there has been a small mistake committed, the receiver sends me word that I had paid 5*l.* less than I should have done, which they did not observe at the time. I have desired Sir Harry —— to make it up, and only mention it that your Grace may regulate your next payment by it.

The Council have met this afternoon, and have passed three of the Irish bills, and will proceed on Tuesday on the rest. I do not mention the bills and amendments, because Mr. Yard will do it, who best knows the transaction of it, being present when the Chancellor of Ireland and the Attorney attended their Excellencies.

The Chancellor of Ireland talks of going out of town next week, and will make you a visit on his way. My Lord Marlborough has got a little fit of the gout; it does not confine him from coming abroad.

I hear my Lord Wharton has had no very good

success in some elections he has laboured for. Simon Maine has lost it at Aylesbury, and Mr. Mordaunt at Brackley.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 30, 1698.

I have spoke with my Lord Chancellor about Mr. Griffith, who says he will recommend him to Mr. Montague. I think, therefore, of delivering the letters, as soon as I can meet with Mr. Griffith, the son.

Your Grace has been pleased to make mention in your two last letters, that you were in some doubt what would be the properest time for your resigning the Seals, and how it may be done with most respect to the King. I do not think myself a good adviser in this matter, as having always wished it might never be done; but now the resolutions are so far taken, if I may deliver my opinion as to the measure, I believe it is fit your Grace should write to the King, and take notice of the liberty allowed you to resign, and to know his pleasure to whom the Seals are to be delivered. This has been so long depending, that I hope it will not be taken amiss by the King; and when his Majesty directs it, the Seals may be so given up as scarce to have any notice taken when it was done. My Lord Chancellor said nothing about my Lord Wharton's embassy, and I did not think it proper to ask him. I am sorry my Lord Wharton

has had no better success in his undertakings about elections. I do not hear but they have every one miscarried. Dormer lost it at Wycomb, Simon Mayne at Aylesbury, Goodwin Wharton, and Neale, for the county of Bucks, where my Lord Cheney and Sir —— Verney have carried it. And they say the Duke of Somerset brings in Colonel Seymour at Cockermouth.

He laments that many honest men will be thrown out at the elections.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 2, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 30th. You have too good an opinion of Sir Harry, if you think he will make any one the compliment of putting them at ease. He knows all his merit lies in being troublesome, and that can't appear enough to his satisfaction, unless it be in the House of Commons, which he will therefore press for, by all the ways imaginable.

I hear he is taking a poll in his own house, to shew what numbers he should have had, if the books had not been closed so soon. Besides he makes great courtship to the Tories and Jacobites, in hopes to make an interest in them to set aside the election. As an instance of it, he lately sent a compliment to Sir* Launcelot Lake, who, with one

* So written.

Smithson, is set up for Knight of the Shire of Middlesex, in opposition to the two old ones, Wolstenholme and Bocknell. Sir Harry sent him word he would come to his election with 400 freeholders, though he never saw him in his life. I find people more in doubt what sort of parliament we shall have, than they were at the beginning. There seems to arise a strange spirit of distinguishing between the court and country party, and visibly discovers itself in several elections.

I have spoke with young Griffith, and given him your Grace's letters. He is gone this morning to Tunbridge, where his father has been this fortnight. I find his pretensions are to be of the Stamp-office. There was a vacancy there by the removal of Mr. Montague's brother, I wish it be not disposed of.

It is but lately come to my knowledge that my Lord Coningsby has got the Paymaster's place of Ireland entirely to himself, and has ousted Charles from it.

The King left a dormant warrant for it with orders not to produce it till he was landed; it was accordingly produced on Thursday last at the Treasury. And that was the first time Sir Stephen Fox heard of it, but he would neither countersign that nor any other orders, and went next day for Northamptonshire, and perhaps may come no more to that Board.

He thought it very strange the King should not so much as take any notice of it to him, and it is not very well liked that my Lord Coningsby should

be so insatiable as to have some new grant every session.

They say this is given for a portion to his lady, and that it is to be the means of accommodating matters between the father and son.

Sir Cornwall Bradshaw is lately dead, whose place of Comptroller of the Customs at Bristol is already given to Mr. Taylor of the Treasury.

The Council have made some further progress this evening in the Irish bills.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 4, 1698.

There is very little to trouble your Grace with by this post. Four of the Irish bills were despatched this evening at council. There do not remain above two or three more, which will be finished on Tuesday next, and then a proclamation will be considered of for giving notice; the attendance of the members of parliament will not be expected on the 24th.

I hear they will be prorogued by writ, which was a method used in Queen Elizabeth's time.

The election for Middlesex was to-day; they say Sir John Wolstenholme and Mr. Lake are chosen, and Sir John Bocknell is left out, who is a very honest, sensible man. The Bishop of London has

been a great shelter for Lake. I am afraid Harry Mordaunt is in danger of being quite left out. My Lord Wharton hoped to bring him in at Cockermouth, but I hear that election is over, and Colonel Seymour, and a son of Sir George Fletcher, are chosen. Another reserve was in the Isle of Wight, in the place of my Lord Cutts. But it seems he has already recommended one Acton, his brother-in-law, or otherwise my Lord Orford had likewise writ to him in behalf of Mr. Priestman.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 6, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 3rd, and believe the matter may have passed at Bishop's Castle, in the manner Mr. Plowden relates it. My Lord Macclesfield generally acts passionately, and therefore what he says in heat and anger ought to be examined over again; and the best of it is, after having vented himself, he will come back to a better temper. I think myself pretty well with him at present, and therefore hope I may persuade him by degrees not to bring this gentleman on the stage, since it makes nothing to the decision of the cause.

I hear that will not be the only town my Lord Macclesfield will find himself disappointed in. We have no account yet of the Lancashire elections, but

a report runs as if many of his friends would be laid aside. I had a letter from my Lady Brownlow on this subject. I answered it with letting her know I was glad Sir William was chosen, but I wished Mr. Plowden had not been employed in it. Sir William Brownlow has behaved himself so harmlessly, and is so right in voting, that I do not think the House will, or ought to part with him.

I send your Grace a list of such elections as we have an account of since the last Gazette. Sir Harry Hobart has lost it for the county of Norfolk; but I believe he may get in at Thetford, when Sir Jo. Williamson resigns. Sloen tells me they would choose one of their own countrymen, and that they shewed a good inclination to Sir Harry Hobart. As for Sloen, his interest was unmoveable there, otherwise he is one of the troublesome gentlemen that some wish out of the house, and for the same reason, some few others would keep him there. Jack Arnold has lost it at Monmouth; whether he has any reserve I know not. My Lord Cutts does not so much as think of Sir Harry Colt; he has already recommended to his borough in the Isle of Wight, one Acton, who married his sister. He is thought too quick in it, since it might have been a provision for a more useful man. My Lord Wharton would have had it reserved for Harry Mordaunt in case he failed at Cockermouth, which is very doubtful, he being opposed by Col. Seymour and Sir George Fletcher's son; and my Lord Orford

had recommended Priestman to him, but I now hear he is to get in at Saltash, and turn out Moyle.

Mr. Molesworth is come up from Cornwall, despairing of success, his adversary, Mr. Manaton, having a visible majority. The town of Penrhyn has been so kind as to choose me again. I had recommended my son to them, but they thought they could best secure it for him against Pendarves upon the single election. So that we shall have another trial for it in the winter. Sir Richard Onslow, with all his popularity, had liked to have lost it in Surrey. Many gentlemen grew angry at seeing how unfairly his brother was returned at Guildford, and therefore encouraged Mr. Weston, who was put by, to stand for the county, and have chosen him by a great majority.

We compute that the elections are much mended for the better. If the county of Gloucester had made a choice more like to that of their city, it would have been more pleasing. People have good hopes of Sir Charles Shugborough, he being so much your Grace's friend.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 9, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 6th. You have found, in the former lists, that my

Lord Wharton has been no less disappointed at Malmesbury than in other places. They add, that Colonel Mordaunt was treated very cavalierly there by my Lord Wharton's steward, who, it seems, has the leading interest there, and told him, in plain terms, that whoever expected to be chosen there should pay him 400*l.* down. What former reasons were given him to make this demand I know not. But it passes about for a jest, and they say will be the ground for a petition. The enclosed will shew what new elections are come to our knowledge. Moyle is left out at Saltash, if Colonel Spellot* do not bring him in, when he shall be chose for the county; and Priestman did not carry it, because the application was made too late to Mr. Boscawen, who was pre-engaged to Morris.

We hear Sir Christopher Musgrave has Essex ——† himself to the University that he cannot serve them. If that be so, Sir William Trumbull is like to pretend again; but I hope they will rather choose Mr. Finch, who is too ill to attend the house, but took it amiss that he was left out last time. Some think that Harcourt will pretend at Oxford; the return from Abingdon, though not yet made, is like to be against him. He has been talked of for Speaker, but he will hardly be in the house time enough, if at all. The contest will lie, therefore, between Sir Thomas Littleton and Mr. Foley. That will immediately throw the house into parties, and

* Apparently so written. † A word or words illegible.

if we do not very much misreckon, we shall have a considerable majority.

The Lords Justices have ordered a proclamation in council this evening for proroguing the Parliament to the 17th of September next. They have likewise gone through all the Irish bills; but upon one that was considered to-day, about allowing equity to the subject against the King, they have ordered a letter to go from the Council to the Lords Justices and Council of Ireland, to know why in this bill, which was framed upon the like bill passed in England in the reign of Henry VIII., several clauses were omitted which the former bill contained, securing several rights and prerogatives to the King, that are here omitted.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 11. 1698.

We have had no account of elections since my last, more than that of Mr. Norris, and one Captain Clayton at Liverpool. I wish Mr. Norris be not piqued at his being left out of the commission of excise. He did not contain himself before upon the subject of the forces, and if he shall touch that string again angrily, he may make it sound harsh, and find a good many followers.

We had two foreign mails to-day. Mr. Blathwayte writes that the King would be going to Zell

SOUTHWARK WITHDRAWN

this week, which I suppose will be a journey of three weeks. It will be a good work if the King can reconcile the house of Wolfenbottle with the other branches, Zell and Hanover, who are at great variance. Duke Anthony of Wolfenbottle opposing the ninth Electorate, and the uniting of Zell to Hanover by the right of primogeniture, which of late has been divided, one to the eldest, and the other to the younger brother.

We hear nothing worse of the King of Spain, nor does he give any hopes of growing better.

The French squadron is sailed from Brest: they are like to be joined by so many other ships in their way, that they will make a greater force than Aylmer carries with him.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 13, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 10th. I believe my Lord Wharton would not be very well pleased with the proposal, if he were not disposed to accept of it. But I don't know why people in health, and who aim at employments, should decline such a public service, when they are every way qualified for the discharge of it.

The letters we had yesterday from Loo make no mention when the King will go to Zell. We hear he has an incommodious guest of the French Am-

bassador. My Lord Paget has sent his secretary back to Vienna. I should have had letters from him, but that Sir Joseph Williamson, under whose cover they came, sent them directly to Loo, which was indeed the properest place. I hear that Monsieur Hofman has an account, that my Lord Paget writ from Sophia, that the Turks had proposed a place for the treaty, and desired the mediators might be at Peter Waradin, and the Imperial and Turkish plenipotentiaries to be at the most convenient places on each side of it. I hope, therefore, that business will proceed.

Mr. Aylmer talks of going to Spithead on Monday next, and that he will put to sea as soon as the ships are paid, for which money is sent down. This will be but a weak squadron, considering what the French have sent out. We should have been glad the Dutch would have joined us with some ships, but there is no appearance of it.

Inclosed is a list of some elections. Sir Thomas Felton and Sir Jervis Ellways have lost it in Suffolk, and Ben Sherwood was out-polled in Rutlandshire. He writ to Mr. Palmer that my Lord Nottingham was the first man that voted against him. The same lord writ very zealously to the University of Cambridge in favour of Mr. Hammond.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 16, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 13th. I see Mr. Walsh triumphs over Mr. Foley. I know not whether we have the same reason to rejoice for Sir John Packington. My Lord Wharton has been run down in all places: it was thought he might make a stand in Oxfordshire, but that failed like the rest. I know not whether my Lord Macclesfield will be more successful in the elections he pretended to influence. There remains only the county and town of Lancaster, at the first of which he sets up his brother, and Sir Joseph Tiley at the other. Ned Harley has displaced Jack Colt, at Leominster, though I believe Morgan of Tredegar, will bring in him, or Arnold, at the borough he was chosen for.

My Lord Chancellor goes to Tunbridge to-morrow, and my Lord Jersey went for Dover this morning. Aylmer went yesterday to Portsmouth; the money is following him to pay the ships.

The French letters bring the King of Spain nearer and nearer to his end. The Spanish Ambassador's Secretary tells me, the month of September has been observed to be fatal to that family. His father died in it, and many others. They were in hopes he might have been relieved by his hemorroids, but they come upon him in excess.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 18, 1698.

The Council met this day, and had the writ read to them, by which the Parliament is to be prorogued. The members of the House of Commons that shall attend, are to be sworn by my Lord Steward, or those he shall depute to give them a right to go into their House, but when they are, they will not be sent for as formerly, by the Usher of the Black Rod; but upon any private notice given them, that the Lords are ready to read the writ, the House of Commons are to go thither, if they think fit, and hear it. It is to be read by the clerk of the Parliament, so that there will be no Commissioner nor any Speaker in the House of Lords for that day. My Lord Chancellor staid in town to read the writ, and to-morrow morning he goes for Tunbridge.

Inclosed is a list of some elections. All I have to observe upon it, is, that my Lord Macclesfield has not been able to bring in Sir Joseph Tiley, at Lancaster. His brother, I think, was not opposed in the county, else it might have gone hard with him. Ned Clarke is come to town, who has got himself returned with Sir Harry Portman, and Mr. Speke is dropped, who had a number of voices equal to Mr. Clarke. He says in those cases the Mayor is at liberty to return which of the two he pleases, and that those who would complain of it, ought to shew

they have a better title. That the Solicitor General was in the like case since the revolution, and it then appeared there were several precedents to justify such returns. In the meantime, Mr. Speke is very much dissatisfied at it, and will complain of it as an injustice done him.

The Council have approved of the two charters for the subscribers, one to entitle them to their funds, the other to the trade; which they will soon have under the Great Seal, and then fall to the carrying on their other business; whereby they do not doubt, but they shall retrieve the small discount their actions lie under at present. There is a clause in the charter, to enable them to receive into the incorporation any of the subscribers, which is done with regard to the members of the old company, who, it is hoped, will not always stand out.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 20, 1698.

I write this only to acquaint your Grace, that Mr. Montague intends to be at Winchendon,* early on Monday, where he will communicate to you two letters, one from the Earl of Portland, the other from my Lord Chancellor, containing matters of very great consequence relating to Spain, which the King would

* Winchendon, I believe, was a seat of the Earl of Orford. The news here mentioned was the opening of the first partition treaty.

have considered here. My Lord Chancellor thinks it very necessary to have your Grace's advice. There are none yet acquainted with it but my Lord Orford and Mr. Montague, by my Lord Chancellor's directions; and I don't know whether it will be judged requisite to be imparted to any other except your Grace, and therefore I forbear any farther mentioning, not knowing through what hands the letter may pass.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 23, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 20th, and hope you are now in the enjoyment of your friends. I promised Mr. Montague, that if I heard from my Lord Chancellor, I would send him word. I had a letter from his Lordship this afternoon, wherein he offers to come to town on Friday night, as fearing a journey to Tunbridge might be too troublesome to my Lord Orford and Mr. Montague. I have assured by this post of the contrary, and that they have too great a consideration for him to divert him from the course he is in, and that I knew of no business that could or ought to prevent it.

I had the first opportunity this day of seeing Mr. Griffith, he having been at Tunbridge ever since I received your Grace's letter. I find how much I

am obliged to your Grace for the good opinion he knows you have of me, that he chooses to come to me; he has promised to do his best to be informed in that matter, and is very desirous his name may be concealed. He expressed some concern that his son should be so long neglected; who, though he has married a good fortune, he would be glad to see him in some employment. I hope now your Grace has Mr. Montague with you, you will please to engage him to do something for young Griffith. His desires are towards the stamping office, and I believe the vacancy is not yet filled; for its being promised I don't doubt. But your Grace knows better than any body of what consequence it is to the public service, that the Secretaries may now and then have interest enough to recommend a worthy person, when they do it without any private considerations; they must otherwise make but an insignificant figure, if they have no other way of gratifying people, but out of the King's small allowance for secret service.

Mr. Griffith tells me he takes it for granted, the meeting at Newbury was in the nature of a provincial synod, which he has found the Presbyterian ministers very fond of late, and blames them for it. This passion of theirs has appeared more barefaced in Ireland, where they have had such an assembly at Antrim, and published the sermon preached upon the occasion, maintaining it was their right and duty to meet, with or without the allowance of the laws, or the consent of the supreme magistrate.

If your Grace will turn to their text, it is the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and the 15th and 16th verses. There you will have their precedent at large, where the apostles and elders were ———*

The Episcopal clergy intend to remonstrate to the government there against this liberty; I know not how soon we may expect the like to be done in England, and if it break into an open contest about church discipline, the moderate man will have a fine time of it. We hear Sir Scroop How and Mr. White have lost their election in Nottinghamshire, by a great majority, and that Harcourt has at last got himself returned by my Lord Abingdon's influence.

The news at the Custom House yesterday was, that Sir Harry Hobart had had a quarrel with one Le Neve, a gentleman in Norfolk, and was run into the belly. I know not whether he be irrecoverable, but his lady and surgeons are gone down in great haste.

Sir Edward Seymour and Sir Bartlemy Showre have carried the election at Exeter, by a great majority of near two hundred each.

Hayward is just now arrived, and has brought me your Grace's letter of this day.

A French post arrived late this evening, but finding Mr. Montague has a letter from the same

* Here follow some words which are unintelligible. Neither is it possible that the text can be correctly cited.

hand, which is sent to him, I need only say that they bear nothing worse of the King of Spain's health.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 25, 1698.

I suppose Mr. Montague will be in town to-night, and if so, I will endeavour to see him to-morrow morning.

We had a Dutch post yesterday, but there is no mention yet made when the King intends to go to Zell; I suppose he would see this business some way settled before he thinks of it.

Yesterday's post brought us an account of poor Sir Harry Hobart's death. He received his wound on Saturday, and died on Sunday night: they say he sent the challenge to Le Neve, one of the militia captains, who had reported him a coward. Le Neve declined the first challenge, but complied with the second; he is likewise hurt in two or three places, but not mortally.

I hear Sir Harry has left his affairs but in a confused condition, and his two brothers almost destitute; he had eight children, a great debt upon his estate, and law entanglements upon his wife's fortune.

My Lord Paston is endeavouring to make an interest at Thetford, where Sir Harry pretended,

and has writ to me to mention it to Sir Joseph Williamson. He complains very much that a Lord Lieutenant should make such use of his commission and authority in opposing those who were firm to the King's interest, and setting up others of contrary principles.

Sir Fleetwood Sheppard died this morning at Copt Hall, having been for some time bed-ridden. He left no will, and they say there was no occasion for it. If he has made even with the world, it is all that is to be expected.

The proroguing of the Parliament by writ went off yesterday very orderly; about sixty-three of the members were sworn by a deputation from my Lord Steward, and a great many more came too late for it. When four or five of the Lords were met, we went to the Lords' House without other summons, and heard the writ read by the clerk. We were within the bar, though it seemed a doubtful point whether it should be allowed us. It was said, there is one mention made in the Lords' Journal, that the Commons were at the bar upon the same occasion. But Sir Harry Goodrick, who was one of my Lord Steward's commissioners, explaining it to us that the reason for such a precedent could not be understood, since it was not properly a House of Lords, there being neither speaker nor commissioners, but a mixed assembly of both.

My Lord Romney treated the Duchess of Portsmouth yesterday at Greenwich; she went thither

and came back by water. I don't know but it was the wisest way, for the mob begins to ask what she comes over for, and whether she thinks to carry back £100,000 under pretence of arrears of pensions; and some come out with it, that she shall not eat Christmas-pies here.

We have had another attempt on the mail on Tuesday night; the Chester mail was robbed a mile on this side St. Albans.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 26, 1698.

Since I am designed for Tunbridge to-morrow, I must acknowledge to-night the honour of your Grace's letter of the 25th.

This impudence of Fuller's is very provoking; he has played the same tricks with the Earl of Albermarle that he does now with your Grace. He has writ letters to him lately, dated from Newcastle, to desire him to return him £300 as he promised him, for carrying on the business he had engaged him in. And I do not doubt but he has received part of it of some credulous honest-hearted man. His Lordship is very much provoked at this and some of his former pranks, and has sent to me that some stop may be put to it.

I have advised with Nicholas Baker, who tells me that if proof be made that he has cheated people of

their money under pretence of serving the government, and by directions of persons in authority, he may then be prosecuted in the King's name, or otherwise he is only liable to be sued by the party he imposed upon.

I have, thereupon, writ to the mayor of Newcastle, to enquire whether he be there, and what he is doing; and according as he shall have proof upon oath against him that he is abusing the King's subjects by colour of his authority, that he secure him in order to his being prosecuted.

I have not seen Mr. Griffith since I last mentioned him, I hope your Grace has not forgot his son.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 1, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 29th. I expect to hear from Newcastle about the beginning of next week; and if Fuller be there he will be secured for a cheat. I have told my Lord Chief Justice what tricks he was playing; he says he ought to be prosecuted, though he fears he is *pillory proof.*

I received yesterday a letter from John Dutton Colt, who desires me to send the enclosed to your Grace, and tells me I have an interest to procure for him a commissioner's place in the Customs now Sir Harry is dead. I know of no such interest I

have, if it were more I should not much care to employ it that way; but I take it for granted the number will now stick at the former seven, and that the augmentation would not have been made but for the particular concern the Treasury had to do something immediately for Sir William St. Quintin. However, these sort of men must have some answers made them or another.

I believe your Grace will either write yourself to Mr. Blathwayte, or refer it to me to do it, and I shall not fail to obey your directions.

Here is likewise a letter enclosed from Monsieur d'Hervart, who, I suppose, gives your Grace an account that he had sent you a little bag of vulnerary herbs. On Monday last, before these letters came, I found in the office a bag, with a superscription directed to me, without any advice about it. I could neither imagine what it could be, nor from whom; but the next day Mr. Boyer explained it, and now Monsieur d'Hervart gives the account of it himself. I have kept the herbs, and shall deliver them to whom your Grace appoints. I believe they have not been carefully enough brought, by being jogged in portmanteaus, for they are very much crumbled and near reduced to powder.

This post makes no mention when the King goes to Zell; but Mr. Cresset, who is there, says the Duke still expects him, and that he is going to Brookhuysen to wait for his coming.

The Imperialists begin to act as if they were in

earnest about the peace. They approve of Peterwaradin being the place of treaty, and intend their commissioners shall be there the 15th of this month; and these resolutions are taken before they have an answer either from Venice or Poland.

The Duke of Savoy has had his citadel blown up by lightning, with 1500 barrels of gunpowder in it. He must make a new provision if he designs to be troubling his neighbours upon the King of Spain's death.

The French letters make no mention of that Prince, so they have no account of his being worse. I had a letter from my Lord Portland, who is apprehensive lest this season may carry him off, and therefore wishes that the opinions about it may be despatched.

I shall not fail to put Mr. Montagu in mind of young Griffith. He came to town last night, and I have seen him only at the Council.

Vice-Admiral Aylmer writes me word, that he shall sail towards the end of the week.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 3, 1698.

We are very free from news, hearing nothing neither from abroad nor at home, only Vice-Admiral Aylmer writes me word, that his squadron is paid

off.* I suppose, therefore, their sailing now depends upon the wind.

I believe your Grace has guessed at the true reason why the Duke of Norfolk acts so indifferently; he has a grant of a pension, but it is not paid. I think they should either oblige him, or not invest him with power to resent a disobligation.

I hear the King has made some provision for Sir Harry Hobart's brother, and made him a Lieutenant Colonel of the Marines, which is a very seasonable favour.

I had a letter from my Lord Yarmouth, who upon the occasion of the late election, finds great fault that the King's authority has been made great use of to the prejudice of his service. I believe his son will try his fortune again at Thetford, when Sir Joseph Williamson quits it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 6, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 3rd. The inclosed of Mr. Oldfield was as I believe he had stated it. Upon his coming over four or five years ago, I took bail for his appearance when required; and I remember the seizing of Mr. Carwyn's money as it was bringing up to town. Mrs. Turner, who is now Mrs. Froud, demanded that money as

* So written, but evidently by mistake.

due to her in discharge of a mortgage, and my Lord Lonsdale appeared very solicitous both for her and Carwyn's sister; the money was at last recovered by them, there being only a suspicion that Carwyn was to raise a regiment, if the assassination had succeeded, and that this money was provided for such an occasion.

Carwyn has since obtained a licence to stay in England, by my Lord Lonsdale's means and Sir Michael Wharton's; but Oldfield retired, not having early notice enough to make his application; and since he has been abroad, I think he wanted friends. Mr. Tyrrel, who was one of the Commissioners for the Privy Seal, brought his petition to me, but I advised him to apply to some person of quality, who should move the King in it, for I could not take upon me to obtain this for any body. I have heard no more of it till now, and the King, before he went over, was grown more difficult in these cases, upon a letter that was intercepted, which Fergus Graham writ to my Lord Middleton, wherein he tells him that according to his directions, he was soliciting for leave to return, that he might be more serviceable to his old master than he could be abroad.

The greatest piece of news we have here is the death of Sir Robert Howard,* and the disposal of his place; he died last Saturday morning, but the news came not hither till the next day. Mr. Montague, who had the first of it, went immediately to

* Auditor of the Exchequer.

Sir Thomas Littleton, and from thence to Mr. Smith, at Hampton Court, to let them know he would be glad of that place, and desired their concurrence in it; this being as much in their disposal as the place of the Clerk of the Pells was, which they gave to Harry Pelham. Since the business of the Exchequer required that the place should be immediately filled, he proposed that it should be given to his brother, Kitt Montague, who was lately made Commissioner of the Excise. He took upon him to satisfy his Majesty for the haste it was done in, without knowing his pleasure. They made no difficulty to gratify him; and accordingly they met yesterday morning, despatched the warrant, and swore Kitt Montague into the place, who accordingly has taken possession of the office.

If Mr. Montague does already know his Majesty's mind in this particular, all is very well; but otherwise, I imagine the King must be surprised to hear such a place is given away without consulting him, and that Mr. Montague should resolve of quitting the place of first Commissioner of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, without communicating to him his intention, for he does not think of joining the three places together.* And if the scheme should be laid that Mr. Smith should be first Commissioner and Chancellor of the Exchequer, his

* It never seems to have entered into Vernon's mind that Montague might be really anxious that the place of Auditor should be given permanently to his brother. He was too well acquainted with the eager and greedy spirit of those days to believe such a thing.

Majesty might expect to have had it concerted with him.

The Auditor's place is certainly the safest and most profitable place, but I thought Mr. Montague was too aspiring to stoop to any thing below the post he was in, and that he least considered profit.

I can't well conceive how Mr. Montague can be spared from the Treasury, especially at this meeting of the Parliament; there will at least be a jealousy that he will not perform the same services, since he does not keep the same post. I can't help having an imagination, that this will not yet fall out according to his expectation, but it may rather happen that his brother will have the place, since he is legally possessed of it, and that his resignation will be one way or another obstructed, that the Chancellor may not give himself so much ease, as perhaps he proposes.

The Princess has been indisposed since Sunday last, with an appearance of her miscarrying. She was let blood the first day, and I hear now is something better.

Mr. Sloen came from Tunbridge this evening. He tells me my Lord Chancellor looks very well, and talks of staying a fortnight longer, if the weather be tolerable. Sloen has handled the sharpers severely, and brought away seven hundred guineas of their money, which he won at the groom-porters. He shewed me a letter from the Mayor of Thetford,

which speaks as if my Lord Paston * would be chosen there.

I had a letter yesterday from the Mayor of Newcastle. He said Fuller had been there, but was gone somewhere into the county of Durham. He had not yet found any body who could give an account of his cheats.

Colonel Dogan has been with me not long since, but I know not what he would have. He has been pressing that he might make out his title to his brother's estate; but when my Lord Athlone, who has the grant of it, was lately in England, and carried over a reference with him into Ireland for examining the Colonel's pretensions, I don't hear that the Colonel's agent appeared to make out his right, though they were very earnest to do it before the reference arrived. And since it is reported that my Lord Athlone has brought away from thence near 20,000*l.*, and carried it to Holland. The last time the Colonel was with me, he would have offered me a great bargain, if I had a mind to be a purchaser under him: but I suppose there are others have already made pennyworths of that estate.

We want two Dutch mails; but have letters from Paris of the 10th (N.S.) My Lord Jersey had received a compliment from Comte Torcy, but no invitation to Compiegne. Those letters speak of the King of Spain's being rather better.

* Euston it would seem.

Your Grace will please to remember that your second payment to the subscription must be made by Monday next, the 12th inst., or otherwise there will be a forfeiture. If you give no order for it in the meantime, I will lay down the money that day.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Sept. 8, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 5th, and Mr. Yard has shewn me the letter Mr. Bromfield writ to your Grace. I am far from thinking him innocent, or that he is wrongfully accused. Robberies on the highway have been so frequent of late, and so many persons have set up that trade, that it will require some severity to suppress it. I have heard the Archbishop lately take a resolution that he would sign no more reprieves for any of them. I question whether Bromfield's services ought to make atonement for his rogueries. I think he has given evidence against some that were in France, and he had some allowance given him that passed through the hands of Nicholas Baker.

I desired Mr. Yard to inform himself from him what those services were, that his merits and his crimes may be laid together before the Lords Justices. A little before he was taken up, he got a warrant from me to apprehend some disaffected persons in Kent, and in that county it was he com-

mitted robberies, and had been likewise upon the highway before he came to me. I know not whether this is the first time he has been apprehended. I find an old town lady has been long a solicitor for him, and now she says she has been married to him these eight months. She formerly appeared for Johnstone, one of the captains of the Scotch regiment, when they revolted at the beginning of the revolution.

I had a letter yesterday from Fuller, dated the 3rd inst., from Newcastle. He says he had seen the contents of my letter to the Mayor of Newcastle, and that he is wrongfully charged by the malice of his enemies, and would know his accusers.

I do not think fit to enter into a correspondence with him, but have desired the Mayor of Newcastle to let him know, that when he comes to Whitehall, as he says he intends very shortly, I shall tell him what he is charged with, and when occasion serves he may see the proofs of it.

I hear the Princess is now thought out of danger of miscarrying.

I have lately seen Mr. Montague, and find that his taking the Auditor's place has been a sudden thought in him, neither concerted with my Lord Chancellor, nor was the King ever acquainted with it. I told him his friends would much less grudge him this advantage, if it were but consistent with his being at the head of the Treasury. His answer was, that he should not be missed there; Mr. Smith

being extremely capable of it, and he should give any assistance that was required. They are both persons of great deserts, but I can't imagine how the King will approve of matters being thus ordered to his hand; especially if what I hear be true, that my Lord Godolphin has long since had his eye upon this place, and obtained a promise of it. But Mr. Montague looks upon himself already as in possession, and I believe would be very much out of humour if it should be delayed.

We are still without our Dutch letters.

Mr. Smith has sent me word he has your Grace's directions to pay your second payment to the subscription, and that he will do it by Monday.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Sept. 10, 1698.

We have not our Dutch letters yet, there being three mails now due.

I had a letter yesterday from my Lord Jersey, who heard the Nuncio had advice that the King was grown worse. But he says he is so great a stranger there, that he knows not what to credit.

The Admiralty sent me yesterday a letter from Captain Price, commander of the Centurion, dated at Cadiz, the 5th of August, giving an account that Comte d'Estree was arrived with his squadron in the Bay of Bulls, that he was coming to Cadiz, and

the salutes on each side were agreed on, that the Admiral should salute gun for gun.

Comte Tallard, before he went over, was proposing a regulation of salutes here, and he was then for a distinction between the flags and the castles, that the latter should return fewer guns, but nothing was concluded on.

Count d'Estree has with him four three-deck ships and three-third rates. There are other French ships sailing from port to port, who make great caresses to the Spaniards, and tell the governors every where that they have their master's orders to comply with any directions they should give them for the service of his Catholic Majesty.

Two Dutch men-of-war were to come from Cadiz the 25th of August, and convoy home a great fleet of merchantmen. I suppose a great part of the bullion will then be brought away, which our ships might have had, if Aylmer had been despatched time enough. He is still at Spithead, detained by contrary winds.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Sept. 13, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 10th. Colonel Pope may depend upon it, that I will do whatever I can to prevent any second let-

ters going to Winchester, to the prejudice of Mr. Brydges, or any other that has a letter already.

I withstood my Lord Scarborough in the summer, when it was for the advantage of a parliament election in a favourite case; and Mr. Smith has been very pressing for a friend of his, and I am afraid will be so still. But I think it so unjust and tricking, that I could not come up to it, even before I knew your Grace would be concerned in it.

We have had four posts from Holland since my last, and one from Spain. I don't doubt but Mr. Yard sends you the copy of Mr. Stanhope's letter, which gives an account of the ill condition the King of Spain was in. I have a letter from my Lord Jersey of the 10th instant, o. s., who writes it was reported at Paris that a courier was gone to Compiegne, with the news of the King of Spain's death. I don't yet see that this makes any difference in his Majesty's journey to Zell, which is appointed for Monday next. Sir Joseph Williamson is sent for to wait on his Majesty at Arnheim: I suppose it is about the grand affair, and that he is to be employed in it. He is on his journey, and therefore I had no letter from him by the Friday's mail.

I hear my Lord Chancellor will be in town tomorrow. Tunbridge grows inhabitable; and he thinks of finishing his course in spa waters, either here, or at Mortlake.

The next post may tell us what his Majesty says to the disposal of the auditor's place. If it were

consistent with the First Commissioner's, his friends would rather he should have it so, and perhaps his enemies too, if there might be more to cavil at on that side. I have spoke to him about Harry Griffith; he is well disposed in his favour. But there is nothing vacant, and when it happens, pretenders are infinite.

A prebend of Worcester fell lately void. I spoke to the Archbishop, and went to the Bishop of Salisbury, in behalf of Mr. Vernon, but the Bishop of Worcester is like to carry it away for his son. God help this poor man if the rich and the young are all to be preferred before him.

It is yet uncertain whether the Princess be out of danger of miscarrying. She fancies she feels the child stir, but wants the assurance of it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Sept. 15, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 12th. Your Grace will have good time now to go to the Duke of Richmond's, the Duchess of Portsmouth being gone from thence. I expect to hear her clamoured against when the Parliament meets; and I do not find the Treasury are in any disposition to pay her arrears. I do not, therefore, see she will have any great satisfaction in coming hither.

I hope this wind will bring us the Dutch mail to-morrow. There are three things one would be glad to hear of:—How the King takes the disposal of the auditors place; whether his journey holds to Zell, notwithstanding the advices of the King of Spain's illness; and what Sir Joseph Williamson went to Arnheim for.

The Treasury Board is now full again; both Sir Stephen Fox and Mr. Pelham were there yesterday.

My Lord Chancellor did not come to town yesterday, but is expected this evening. I hear he has found great benefit by the waters.

Mr. Spence, of the Post-office, is lately dead at the Bath.

I think there is no hopes that the Princess should go out her time; the present care is, that she may miscarry with safety.

My Lord Lexington goes over with the Friday's packet-boat to Holland. He intends to wait on the King to Zell.

I hear the Princess has miscarried this day.

They talk of two troops of my Lord Galway's regiment of horse, that are put into Plymouth by stress of weather. I hope they will make no long stay here, their company not being very grateful.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Sept. 17, 1698.

I saw my Lord Chancellor yesterday morning, who came the night before from Tunbridge. I think he looks very well, but he says he found himself better the first fortnight he drank the waters, than he has done since. He intends to take the spa waters. He longed to know how the King took this sudden disposal of the auditor's place, which he was as much surprised at as any body. He joins in your Grace's expedient, and had rather Mr. Montague should have both the places than quit the Treasury, and does not know the incompatibility of them. In that case, Mr. Smith would be Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Princess miscarried of a male child. Bassier, the surgeon, opened it, and found nothing defective or amiss. He supposes it might have been dead eight or ten days.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Sept. 20, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 17th. We hear nothing more of the King of Spain; and his Majesty has begun his journey this day to Zell.

Sir Joseph Williamson writes to me from Loo, that he has waited on his Majesty and received his commands: for what those were he refers me to what my Lord Portland would write to me by that post; but I received no letter from his Lordship. I hope he did not write, since it would not be fit the letter should miscarry, and otherwise, I am in no great impatience to know why Sir Joseph was sent for.

I don't find that Mr. Montague has heard either from the King or my Lord Albemarle, though he writ to both; but Mr. Blathwayte sends him word that his Majesty does not intend to interpose in the controversy between the Treasury and my Lord Carmarthen, at least, he would do nothing in it till he came back. Mr. Blathwayte falls into a supposition that Kitt Montague being thus provided for, there will be a vacancy in the Excise, and therefore recommends his old friend Mr. Parry. Either he makes the mistake for want of being informed from hence how the scheme was laid, or other people may be mistaken, who think Kitt Montague's resignation may be consented to; but the former passes for most current.

My Lord Albemarle has sent to my Lord Marlborough a list of such servants as the King would have placed about the Duke of Gloucester; in which my son is named for one of the grooms of the bedchamber. Mr. Boscawen is another, and if there be a third it is Mr. Hill. This gives me an occasion to repeat my thanks to your Grace for your con-

cerning yourself from the beginning to procure this advantage for my son, whom I may now look upon as almost out of my care.

Mr. Sayers, I hear, is made first gentleman of the bed-chamber to the Duke, and Mr. Stanley and Mr. Lister, who were the Queen's servants, are appointed gentlemen ushers. It is a doubt whether Stanley will accept of it; he has more mind to stick to the Lord Chamberlain's office.

He is just come from Althorpe; he says they were at first disturbed to hear my Lord Bristol had left his estate to my Lord Digby. But they are better pleased with the account they have received since, that there is no will, but what was made seventeen years ago; and then there was so good an understanding between the brother and the sister, that it is supposed she may inherit.

The news is lately arrived of Colonel Codrington's death. I hear his son will be put in for that government; and perhaps they had better take one that has his fortunes made, than one that should make them there.

Here is a rumour, as if the Jacobites were forming new projects, and that they hold cabals in several parts. One of them is said to spring from Hampshire, conducted by the Higgons. Some of those brothers, I hear, are lately gone to St. Germains; if they be not all on the other side of the water.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Sept. (no date), 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 17th. There is no doubt but the number of troops kept up may be a handle for quarrelling, whenever any angry gentlemen will make use of it. When it is trumped up, it will be with a design to lash some they may envy or disaffect, though they will be in the wrong to make it a personal charge upon any one who are in the administration; since I believe there are none of them but have done their utmost, that the intentions of the Parliament should be complied with. But as this charge lies still upon the kingdom, it will be excused or aggravated according to what shall happen to the King of Spain. If he be dead (as is most likely) before the meeting of the Parliament, I hope the King's firmness and foresight will then be well approved, that he did not suffer the kingdom to be unprovided against such an occasion. And if he should be then living, he will be so like a dead man, and the preparations the French have made to seize that country will be so visible, that perhaps it may have the same effects upon those who shall consider it impartially. The King of Spain fell into his dangerous fits after the votes were passed for disbanding the army, and declaring what they would allow for guards and garrisons. They were then so sparing, and mindful of their liberty, upon

a supposition that the French King would have as good reasons to keep the peace as he had to make it. But when this frightful news came, and they saw the French troops kept up to assert the Spanish succession, it was remarkable that every body grew cooler, and laid aside the thoughts of bringing in a bill for disbanding, which they were once hot upon; and for the same reason, I suppose, they did not bring in an appropriating clause to the two million's bill; in which they would not have omitted mentioning the army. And this clause was not brought in by Mr. Lowndes till Mr. Harley told Mr. Montague he would offer no appropriating clause to that bill, as he had done to the poll and the coal acts. I know of no directions that were given for the framing this clause, but the Treasury had, for their own security, inserted a general power for the issuing such part of that money as should be necessary for the use of the forces both by land and sea, which passed without any remark upon it, though it was well enough understood that it had a regard to a greater number of troops than they had consented to. It was likewise observable they contented themselves with a very slender answer to the address they had made for a list of the forces to be laid before them, and rise without having it.

One ought to think the consideration they had of affairs abroad made them thus passive: however, that may not hinder, but even some of those gentlemen may endeavour to increase new murmurs for the

non-execution of their former votes, which they let fall themselves.

If there appears no reason for keeping up this number, I believe the reducing them will not be much contested. Perhaps the greatest squabble may be about some French regiments, which have been kept, as it were, concealed in Flanders, and all of a sudden are going for Ireland.

The disbanding of English, to keep up French, will be doubly ungrateful, and perhaps be improved to the prejudice of my Lord Gallway, who, I find, has been liable to a good deal of grumbling of late.*

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Sept. 24, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 22nd. If the Duke of Bolton be as much out of humour as has been said, I know not whether I should be sorry, that he comes a little in your Grace's way.

If he be not a dissembler, you will know what he would be driving on this winter; and if fair reasoning can make any lasting impressions upon him, he may happen to be set right again.

I am in doubt how far I can rely upon the infor-

* I have left out the conclusion of this letter, as it contains nothing but vague speculations in regard to elections; and have omitted the letter which follows, as it contains nothing of impornce.

mations given me concerning the Higgons, and some others; the story is told me with some circumstances that are credible, and some that are incredible.

I take it for granted, that the two younger Higgons are lately gone over to France. I should be glad to be satisfied whether the elder brother be not gone likewise. My author says he has been in town, but he went into the country within these three or four days. The discovery pretended to be made is of some design forming against the King's coming over, but of what nature does not yet appear. The Hampshire people I hear named as concerned, are John Todd, a friend and neighbour of Mr. Higgons, and one Everett, an inn-keeper at Hartley-row; but whether there be any such characters I know not, nor what their characters are.

George Sayers is not only made under-governor to the Duke of Gloucester, but is likewise first gentleman of the bed-chamber. Perhaps that might have been designed here for somebody else, and exception is taken that it is given to any but a nobleman.

The sub-preceptor is Dr. Willis, who was one of the King's chaplains at the army. He is a very grave and devout churchman. I know not what particular qualifications he has for educating a prince. Dr. Pratt is still his tutor for the Latin tongue, and Monsieur Persode, who was born at Frankfort, but studied in France, and is brother-in-

law to Brigaut, is to teach the Duke the French tongue; he has no other masters yet, but for writing and dancing.

They have thoughts of giving Dr. Newton* the superintendency of instructing him in the mathematics; and to ease him of a constant attendance, a Scotchman, who is professor at Cambridge.

The Duke is to have three pages, who are sons to the Earl of Bridgewater, Lord Dursley, and the Bishop of Salisbury. He hears they are younger than himself, he wishes they were older, for then he says he should govern them better.

The Council met yesterday. It was the first time my Lord Chancellor has been with the Justices since his coming from Tunbridge.

It was ordered that the next prorogation of Parliament shall be to the 27th of October.

A report was read from the Council of Trade, upon a reference made to them to consider of the price of guineas: they are clear of opinion, that the currency of guineas at 22*s.* is a real prejudice to the nation; that it prevents the bringing of bullion hither, and will, by degrees, carry away what we have; and that it alters the course of exchange to our disadvantage. My Lord Chief Justice was of opinion, that the law had left a latitude to reduce the price if it should be necessary, and the restraint was only against putting of guineas at above 22*s.* But other considerations likewise intervened, par-

* Sir Isaac.

ticularly in relation to loans, which will stop all of a sudden; and now they flow in upon the apprehension only, that the value of gold may be altered, which there is great benefit by towards clearing the revenue: this point of conveniency prevails at present for suspending any determination.

We have a Dutch post to-day. I see no more in it, than that the King is gone to Zell; and they say the King of Spain grows rather better. But if they can't keep off another fit, it is feared he may sink under it.

Sir Joseph Williamson is not yet come back to the Hague.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 27, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 24th. There is no doubt but two of the Higgons have been in France, if they are not there still. One of them only went to St. Germains, and the other was at Compiegne. I hear Lewis is lately gone over, who was gentleman of the horse to my Lord Feversham; he carried over with him about twenty horses, that may be for trade or a countenance, and he may have other business besides. If any of his horses fall to King James's share, one may suspect they are presents.

Sir Joseph Williamson is come back to the Hague:

it looks as if the business were done, but it is to be kept a secret still.

I have letters to-day from Paris, of the 4th of October, N.S. They have it now in their Gazettes that the King of Spain is better; that he dresses, appears publickly, and comes to the cabinet council.

The French court is going to Fontainebleau, and King James is invited thither. My Lord Jersey expects to be there likewise; but he finds them embarrassed between the old court and the new.

The parliament was this day prorogued again by writ, to the 27th of October. Some new members would have been glad to be sworn, but there were no commissioners to do it; there were three appointed by my Lord Steward, viz. Earl of Bridgewater, Sir Harry Goodrick and Mr. Smith. The two first are out of town, and the other was not well.

The Council should have met to-day, but there were not Lords enough, so it is put off till Thursday. There is a controversy depending at council between the city and Sir Thomas Montpesson, who had leave from the King to put up a pair of stairs on the river, between Hungerford-market and York-buildings, but the city pulled them down, and being summoned to answer it, they have hitherto avoided it under one pretence or other. I don't yet know whether they intend to appear at all.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 29, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 26th. There is no expectation that the parliament should meet in October; perhaps there may be more than one prorogation before they do.

I shall see my intelligencer to-morrow, if he has any thing more to say to me.

Fielding writes that there are great suspicions of something brewing in the North; he hopes to arrive at the knowledge of it, but can't do it yet.

They are polling in the city for a mayor; the contest lies between Sir Peter Daniel and Sir Francis Child. There will be no great choice of either of them: the Bank and the new East India Company have spoiled Sir Francis for a good Whig.

There has been a seizure of wines lately at Somerset-house, to the value of 1500*l.* Some that had been servants to my Lord Feversham thought they had found a secure place for smuggling.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 1, 1698.

We have a pretty strange story from Barbadoes, by a ship lately arrived at Portsmouth. They give

an account of Mr. Gray's arrival there on the 27th of July, with the Sandados and Speedwell men-of-war, in the latter of which a design was laid to seize the officers and run away with the ship, on a pirating voyage to the South Sea. But it was discovered a fortnight before they reached Barbadoes, and at their arrival there, twenty-five of the seamen were brought prisoners ashore; among the rest, an old buccaneer, who was the contriver of the project. They say the same was laid in the Queenborough, a ship appointed to carry Sir Thomas Day's son to his government at Bermudas, and they believe that has taken effect.

It is but a melancholy reflection to find the fleet infected with this kind of debauchery, which nobody knows how far it may spread. One may see what has led them to it,—the long want of pay, and the abuse in the manner of it; the ill example set by the officers, who have defrauded the men of the shares they should have had of prizes, cheating and embezzling themselves, and allowing nobody else, at least not the poor sailors, to be the better for it; the corruption and neglect of the governors in the West Indies, in receiving pirates under their protection, and sharing with them in the plunder. How the discipline of the navy will be restored is another question, and without it our security is gone, and our sea walls are undermined.

I had a letter last night from my Lord Gallway, in which he sent the copy of what had been writ to

Colonel Echlin by an unknown hand, giving an account, in general, that something was designed against the King's person, and they were endeavouring to get a more particular information.

My intelligencer was with me last night, who tells me of another meeting Higgons and his friends have had, but he still makes a very blind story of something intended which is come to no maturity. I let him go on his own way.

By what my Lord Jersey writes to your Grace, I guess he has had some communication of what has been doing: there is nothing more to be known in it than what Mr. Montague shewed you, for the matter would admit of no alteration.

The Messengers, and Poyche, their clerk of the cheque, are fallen out, so that we are taking their informations. They charge him with several abuses, as allowing bills for persons that never waited, on raising or sinking of bills as he found his account in it. When the articles are ready, I shall discharge myself by laying them before the Lords Justices.

I don't hear that the poll is yet over in the city.

Since the quarter has ended, and his Majesty has not yet thought fit to put you at ease, I know not how to avoid putting your Grace in mind that Monsieur Jurieu will be very soon pressing in behalf of the correspondents.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 4, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 2d instant, but I can yet make no guess when the King will be here. I expect he may be at Loo about this day se'nnight. Monsieur d'Alonne said he would make but a short stay there before he comes to the Hague; others imagine he will keep his birth day in Holland. Soon after the King returns to Loo, I suppose we may know what his intentions are.

Monsieur Hofman has been with me to make a compliment from Count d'Aversberg, who was newly arrived in Holland. He says the Count had been endeavouring to wait on the Pensioner, but was surprised to hear that he was not in town, and nobody knew whither he was gone. He took notice of a great report he met with there, that the business of Spain was adjusted between the two Kings, but he pretends to give no credit to it.

The Council met to-day upon the two Irish bills. Mr. Solicitor opened the nature of them, and they are referred to the Commissioners of Trade to give their opinion of them, and see whether any amendments are fit to be made in them. Mr. Solicitor tells me he thinks them so drawn, as if they were intended to be made effectual.

The Council of Ireland have done their part; and

if the Parliament do so too, we shall have nothing to clamour at on that side this winter.

In their Woollen Bill they lay 4*d.* per pound* upon all broad-cloth exported, and 2*d.* upon all other cloths, except frize, over and above the present duty, for carrying on the linen manufacture,—each county is to be charged with three or four hundred pounds per annum, besides the charge of erecting work-houses.

Sir Francis Child is our Lord Mayor elect, he and Sir Richard Levet being returned to the Court, and Alderman Daniel lost it by near fifty voices.

Sir Thomas Powys was married on Sunday last to a daughter of Sir Philip Meadows.

Mr. Hill is lately come over in one of the yachts, to solicit the payment of some arrears in Flanders.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 6, 1698.

We have an Irish post to-day, which gives an account of the opening of the Sessions there: the speech made by the Lords Justices is enclosed; the marginal notes are to be the heads of the address voted by the House of Commons. They adjourned to the Saturday following, and the Lords to Monday. Many of the opposing Lords being absent,

* This was to satisfy the jealousy of the English cloth-workers, and the wild and extravagant fancies which supplied the place of political economy in that day.

the rest moved that the call of the House should be on Monday. However, Mr. Methuen likes the complexion of things hitherto; he finds the country gentlemen are come to Parliament with very cool thoughts. The Duke of Ormond is like to be at the head of the opposing party, who make great court to him; he has taken a house over against the Parliament House, and intends to live with the same magnificence he did at Kilkenny.

We are like to have a mortal strife between my Lord Steward and Lord Stamford, about the axe-bearer of Needwood. My Lord Steward has sent up a character of him under the gentleman's hands, that shews him unfit for any trust, much less that which was always given before to a gentleman. And my Lord Stamford is tenacious of his right to dispose of the place, exclusive of the Lieutenancy of the Forest. When they come to town the matter will be brought to the Council. I have had occasion to write twice or thrice to my Lord Stamford, by their Excellencies' directions, by which I find I have incurred his displeasure, but I am the less concerned at it, as I think he is in the wrong throughout.

My Lord Dorset has sold Copthall to the quakers. What they will do with it I know not, but they have given him 20,000*l.* for it, which was more by four or five thousand pounds than any body else would.

They say my Lady Dillon is betaking herself to the play-house for her support.

The Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen at-

tended the Council to-day, upon their pulling down Sir Thomas Montpesson's water-stairs; the result was, that Sir Thomas (is to) go on with erecting his stairs, and if he be any more molested, that the suit be defended at the King's charge.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 8, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 5th. My intelligencer has been with me again, and now he relates a fact which may evince the truth of his discovery, if it be real. He says the party have at last agreed upon buying horses, and that they will do it in several counties for preventing suspicion. They intend twenty or thirty horses shall be bought in Hampshire, and that he and one Johnson are employed about it. He says they are to receive the money for it from Mr. Plowden, who lives within three miles of Basingstoke, whose son has been at several of their meetings, and that they are to go down to Hampshire about it. I take in writing all he says, but before I can give entire credit to it, I desire to see some more evident proof.

I can't well imagine how those who are now prisoners in Newgate for smuggling, can carry on any material correspondences, or what great occasion there should be for them, now the peace has laid the

coast open, and all sorts of people go freely backward and forward.

I hear from Calais of priests coming over every day, and here they got into the herd, so that it is hard to distinguish them. I think some means or another should be thought on to restrain the liberty they take.

We have discovered lately some counterfeit malt tickets, and have seized one Carter, who was principally concerned in putting them off. I hear Chaloner is the person who engraved the plate. I think the mischief, however, is prevented; there have not been above ten or twelve given out, and we know where they are.

We have no letters from Paris or Holland.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 11, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 8th. If you are unalterable in your resolutions of resigning, and the King expects you should do it in person, I hope you will find but little inconvenience by it. The letters we had yesterday tells us that the King was to go to Zell from Goar, and would begin his journey this way to-morrow, so that I suppose he will be at Loo about Friday next.

Mr. Brian, who is lately come from Holland, reports that the King will not pass the seas till the

first light nights in November. He mentions likewise another thing, that it is believed in Holland the adjustment was made at Loo about the Spanish succession. That Comte Tallard and Sir Joseph Williamson, were shut up with the King seven or eight hours, and the Pensioner went very soon after to confer with Mr. Dytevelt, in Flanders.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Oct. 13, 1698.

I received yesterday the honour of two of your Grace's letters of the 10th. I have not seen my intelligencer since; I do not expect him till to-morrow; but if he makes out his story of buying horses, more than ordinary care must be used to find out the rest of his discovery.

We had letters yesterday from Ireland of the 6th. I perceive the further they go on, greater difficulties are like to appear. The speech was taken into consideration the day before, and it was expected the House would have passed a general vote for a supply; but instead thereof, they fall into a general debate about laying a duty on the woollen manufacture, in which, as they pretend, to give satisfaction to England, that they will not injure the woollen trade here; so it looks as if they were maintaining the point that the heads of a bill for supplies should arise from

them. It seems yet uncertain whether they will make this a distinct bill, or join it with the other parts of the supplies. The house was to go into a committee on Saturday last, when these matters were further to be debated. They expected there would be a fuller house within a few days, and then they should be able to make a judgment of the success of the sessions, which seems but doubtful at present. They are aiming again at the Habeas Corpus Bill, having appointed a committee to prepare and bring in heads of a bill for preservation of the liberty of the subject.

I hear the Lords Justices of Ireland have writ to their Excellencies here, to acquaint them what the Commons are driving at by their Woollen Bill, and think they desire to receive directions from hence how they are to behave themselves, if such bills be brought them. This seems to be a very strange step, and I suppose will not be much approved of here.

The Council have met to-day, and dispatched both the Irish bills, which are ordered to be forthwith engrossed, and sent away with all diligence. The Council of Trade did not make their report about the duty that ought to be laid on Irish cloths and stuffs, to bring them on a par with the English manufacture. I hear they had almost finished it when the Council were about to rise; but as the case stands at present, it seems much the best way to let them have their Woollen Bill, as they sent it, since

they are not likely to pass it, as it had been prepared there; and it would not be fit to give them a handle to lay the rejecting it upon any alterations that should be made here.

The Council have approved of a proclamation against forestallers of markets, which are described over again, as they are in several statutes; and the justices of peace will be required, by particular letters from the Council, to the several Custors, that the laws in these cases be put in execution.

Mr. Norris was chosen Ambassador to the Mogul by the Directors of the East India Company on Tuesday last: there were three others in nomination with him, viz.: Lord Howard of Escrick, Mr. Duncomb, and Mr. Oxenden, one who had lived in India. The number was that day reduced by the ballot to two, viz.: Mr. Norris and Lord Howard; the latter would not have come so near it, but that Norris's friends chose to give their voices to him as the less dangerous competitor, for the next day Norris had 17 voices, and his lordship only 5, whereas he had 13 the day before.

Mr. Norris was proposed this day to the Lords Justices, who like very well of him, and will send to his Majesty for his approbation, as also to know his Majesty's pleasure about complying with the Company in their desires, that the Ambassador may go in one of the men-of-war, which is ordered to India for the suppression of pirates.

I believe the Earl of Berkeley is now dead. My

Lord Dursley told me in the morning he lay a dying. I do not find this will make any alteration in his lordship's going to Turkey.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Oct. 15, 1698.

I had a letter from Prior yesterday of the 18th, N. S. My Lord Jersey had received no answer to the letter he had writ for directions about his going to Fontainbleau, and therefore he was still at Paris, and happens to be the only minister that is not at court.

In the meantime, he hears that King James and his Queen are highly caressed at Fontainbleau; that the chief court was made to Queen Mary, every body being at her toilet in the morning; that the King of France comes thither to lead her to chapel; that at meals the Queen is placed between the two Kings at the upper end of the table, and equal marks of distinction and sovereignty are paid to all three, and *à boire pour le Roi d'Angleterre, ou, pour la Reine*, is spoke out as loud, and with as much ceremony, as for the King of France.

I believe my Lord Jersey is a little mortified at the figure he is obliged to make there. I think he has done himself no great right in the choice of his house, which I hear is towards the *Marais du Temple*.

It is a very remote quarter, if he has no particular reasons for it.

There is nothing said of the King of Spain, therefore I suppose he is not thought to be in any great danger.

Perhaps the French think the reason is ceased for magnifying it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

18th October, 1698.

* * * * * *

* I have got Chaloner at last, who is at his old play of recriminating, and he turns it upon his accusers that they made the plate; and he makes it a merit in himself that he kept it from them, so as they could not do all the mischief they intended.

It is certain I have now a parcel of rogues in my hands, who are the most notorious that ever were for coining, clipping, forging, counterfeiting, and all manner of villainy, and yet they are such intriguing crafty knaves, that I fear they will all escape. Davis and Carter, who accuse Chaloner, happen both to have been pilloried upon Chaloner's evidence, in the Bank business. The King's Council are to meet at the Treasury on Thursday, to consider what is to be done with them.

* A part of this letter omitted.

I have yet a greater difficulty upon my hands, which I wish I could see the end of. Sir William Jennings has been making some overtures of late, about his coming over from France, pretending he had information to give that might be of use to the publick. The King having been acquainted with it, directed that he should make his discovery, and then he would consider whether he should have leave to come over.

This message has been carried him both by his wife and his son; but both brought back answers he would be in possession of his pardon first. About a month ago his son desired he might make another trial. In the meantime, his former journey being taken notice of, orders were given to secure him, if he were found again in France.

However he got to his father; and perceiving how the case stood, that either he or his father, or both of them, must be sacrificed, he said so much to Sir William of his own head, and gave him such assurances of his being safe here, that he prevailed on him to come over with him by the way of Ostend, and here they arrived last night.

Sir William came to me privately, and when I heard his story, which I found to be no great matter, and rather conjectures than any thing else, I asked him how he ventured to come over.

He told me what assurances his son had given him in my name. I said I would undeceive him in that particular; that nothing of this was done either by

my order or privity; and I went to call his son in, who was in the next room, but overheard the discourse, ran away, and has not appeared since.

I told Sir William what was my part to do, and put him under the custody of a messenger, to be secured till his Majesty's pleasure be known; and have likewise acquainted my Lord Chancellor with what had passed.

The more I reflect on this affair I am in greater perplexity about it. I have some pity for an old man that I see trepanned into danger by his own son; and that my name has been made use of, when I was far from giving any authority for it, and was better apprised of the law that I could not do it, if I would. On the other hand, I cannot but have a little remembrance of the good-nature of our countrymen, who may dress up this event in what shape they please.

We have Dutch letters to-day, which tell us the King came to Loo on Thursday last; that he was expecting the Duke of Bavaria, who was to stay with him three or four days, and after that he would be preparing for his return to England.

I suppose, however, he will not come till the light nights in November. The King has left it to the Lords Justices to consider of the proper time of the Parliament meeting, which I believe will be fixed in the first week of December.

My Lord Montague gave me the inclosed for my Lord Marlborough. It was brought him to-day by

the door-keeper, while he was at the Council, and he opened it, as taking it for a letter directed to himself. He says he found the mistake before he had read any part of it, and my Lord Chancellor saw him seal it up immediately; then it was he gave it me.

Your Grace may please to tell my Lord Marlborough that the cause of Eastlow came on to-day. The issue was, that not only the smugglers are ordered to be prosecuted, but likewise the magistrates, for publishing an order, the intent whereof is to discourage the discoverers.

His Lordship will understand by it that the Bishop of Exeter will no more forgive the absent than those that were present at this judgment.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 20, 1698.

I had a letter from my Lord Jersey yesterday. He was thinking to go to Fontainbleau, but hearing that King James was come away from thence, he has altered his mind, lest it should be thought he forbore going there on his account.

He says these journies give King James great opportunities of seeing young English travellers, and he affects shewing civility to them.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 22, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 19th, and was glad to see a letter from Fuller's friends, who begin now to get the better of the charm, and to come out of their delusion, though they are still in doubt whom they should give most credit to, whether to Fuller or me. But their appealing to your Grace will, I hope, undeceive them, if they are capable of recovery. I see they suspect me because I did not hit immediately upon Fuller's designs in his transactions with them. I thought all cheats were framed for picking men's pockets. It seems he was coming to that by degrees; and in the meantime, I suppose he has pointed out me for a jacobite as would rather protect the enemies of the government, than have them discovered.

I thought it best, therefore, to forbear writing myself on this occasion, lest it may have no other effect than my former letters had. But Mr. Yard and I have agreed in what manner he shall write to the Mayor of Newcastle, in your Grace's name, and by your command, and he will send a copy only of these gentlemen's letter, by which they will sufficiently understand that their letter has been delivered, and one does not know what occasion there may be for keeping the original. If these men are not strangely infatuated, upon seeing Mr. Yard's

letter they will be ingenuous with the Mayor, and tell him all the impostures Fuller would have put upon them.

In which case the Mayor would do but his duty, if he followed the advice and direction I gave him, that he should secure Fuller if he met with any informations against him upon oath, that he had abused his Majesty's subjects upon false pretences of his being employed by persons in authority; and as I see occasion hereafter, I shall give the Mayor the same advice.

My intelligencer begins now to be more particular. He was with me on Thursday night, and tells me that the party had provided sixty horses; that some were dispersed about in Kent, and some in town in horse-courser's hands, which is no good topic of conversation. That they had engaged an innkeeper of Canterbury, and had paid in 1,100*l.* of the subscription money; that they had their men ready to mount their horses, and talked of having twenty foot.

He promises a list of the men, but does not know where they are to be found. I am amazed at the mixture I find in this discovery, that a man should be admitted into such a secret, be present at all their meetings, and yet know things so imperfectly.

But whatever is in it must now come to light. If they have such a design, they cannot delay putting all their preparations in a readiness, and I must perform my part to secure as many of them as I can, before the King's coming over.

I cannot but consider that as the discovery of a

real plot is the best of services, so it may have a very ill effect in a new Parliament, if for want of proof, they should think one has been hatching a sham plot only to amuse them, and for bye purposes. I cannot avoid, therefore, allowing a little more time to let this matter ripen, and I wish it may be made out satisfactorily at last.

I told my intelligencer that one of the Higgons was come over in the last packet boat from Calais. I found he had heard nothing of it; but promised to bring me an account of what he has been doing at St. Germains.

I see no occasion for inquiring after Sir Nicholas Steward. He was only mentioned as having a relation in Holland.

What the Oxfordshire gentlemen told your Grace, one does accidentally meet with from other hands.

I believe I shall take up a non-juring parson to-day, who deals in policies of insurance upon King James's restoration. He pays a guinea to receive fifty, if King James, or his Son, be restored on the throne, by Michaelmas next.* And I hear from Calais, that Major Bosier is arrived there, who belongs to the Duke of Berwick.

He talks of a rumour he has heard of a fresh design against the King; but pretended to detest any such villainy.

I wish they had told me at the same time, for what reasons he came thither.

* It would seem almost a pity to arrest such a man, for he made it the interest of every one to whom he paid his guinea, to keep King James away.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Oct. 25, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 22nd. What you would have done with the letter about Fuller, I hope has been pretty punctually observed.

I find he has already shifted his quarters, and would not stay to hear his character. I had a letter from him last night by the penny post, whereof the inclosed is a copy. He is now changing his battery, and thinks, by threats, to make me employ him; but I will stand his shock. This is such a rogue, that it is a shame to a government where he walks at liberty.

Sir William Jennings was taken so ill on Saturday night, that the messenger thought he would have died. I have sent Dr. Hutton to him, who has set him up again. He brought a great cold over with him, and being old, fat, and close confined, he was almost stifled. I wish my Lord Marlborough would concern himself for him. It would be hard that a man should suffer, who was foolishly brought over by his son. The King has had an account of every step of this matter just as it passed; but I suppose he will give no directions till he comes over. Mr. Blathwayte writes that will not be so soon as we expected, for the King thought of staying till the

20th of the next month, unless he altered his mind upon what the Lords Justices should write to him about the time the Parliament ought to meet.

We had letters from Ireland yesterday of the 15th, which gave an account that matters are much mended there. The day the house was to go into a committee upon the quantum of supply, a debate was designedly started, and vehemently pursued, that an address should be made for disbanding the French regiments, which yet was carried in the negative by 101 against 72.

After that, the same party opposed the going into a committee that day; but that was carried in the affirmative by 105 against 55; and before they rose, they voted the total of what had been demanded, viz.: 138,000*l*, and some odd money.

This resolution being reported, the 15 was carried by 98 against 64; and would have been carried by a greater majority, but that several were absent upon assurances there would be no opposition made to the report.

But the difficulty still remains about the Woollen Bill, as I find by the pains Mr. Methuen takes to convince me, that the Linen Bill is, to all intents and purposes, as much a money bill as the other. I perceive there are two things apprehended, one is from England, that they shall be reflected on for giving up a bill which is looked upon as the only money bill; the other is the defection of their friends in

Ireland, many of whom cannot be brought to approve of the Woollen Bill. And yet he maintains it is not on account of the sole right; but that I must confess I do not understand, and I think they do not enough consider the risk they run the other way.

If the Parliament of Ireland should lay aside this, and frame no Woollen Bill, it would lie hard on the Justices and Chancellor, that they had no regard to the addresses of the Parliament here, which were sent them by the King's directions.

If the Parliament prepares such a bill, I suppose they will not lay the duty higher than in the other bill; and if they put it lower, it will certainly be rejected here, and I question whether they will pass it with the same duty. The Commissioners of Trade having made their report, since the bill was approved of, that the duty ought to be 40 per cent. to bring it to a par.

So that, for avoiding any displeasure about the sole right, which few in comparison understand, they may open the mouths of the nation against them for giving away their trade.

I am of opinion, that if the Irish considered their interest in this matter, they would pass the Woollen Bill as it went from hence, for they will never have so good a bargain of it again; and it would not have passed so now, but for the advices that just then came about their making a bill for themselves.

The bill for the preservation of the King's person is like to have no better fortune than it had the last

sessions. It being referred to a committee, the article men* were allowed to be heard by counsel against that clause of it which enjoins the oaths, and prescribes the penalties. It was carried at the committee by ten to leave out the paragraph. If the house agree to it, there is an end of the bill, and we shall be rid of the zealous foreign ministers' importunities, who cry out against that clause as the very firebrand of persecution.†

* * * * *

I have seen my Lord Marlborough, and told him what has happened to Sir William Jennings.

What Mr. Blathwayte writes to me about the affairs of Ireland is, that his Majesty had signified his pleasure to the Lords Justices concerning the unreasonable pretensions of those in Ireland, his Majesty being unwilling to recede from so undoubted a right, which those gentlemen are calling in question.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Oct. 29, 1698.

* * * * *

‡ They write from Loo, that Monsieur d'Alonne is made Dutch Secretary, and has got Monsieur

* Persons affected by the articles of Limerick.

† A part wanting.

‡ The commencement wanting.

Zalecherie's place. I must needs say this is not what I expected, that a place which my Lord Albemarle had executed so long, should be given to a creature of my Lord Portland.*

I suppose it must cost the King something considerable to set the balance even.

I have just now a letter from Mr. Prior of the 26th inst. o. s. He says my Lord Jersey went for Loo on Saturday last, the King having sent for him; but first he went to Fontainebleau, and desired a private audience of the King, the same night, which Monsieur de Torcy was much surprised at when Mr. Prior first told him of it, and would have made so sudden an audience impracticable, pretending the King was in strict devotions, being to receive the communion next day. But he was better satisfied when my Lord Jersey let him know he was pressed to go to Holland, so that at ten that night he had his audience, and came back with abundance of assurances of the King's resolutions to keep the peace. He adds, there is a flying report as if the Court of St. Germains were to remove to Chambord, but he knows not what ground there is for it.

* Albemarle had by this time completely superseded Portland in the King's favour, though not in his esteem; and through the rest of William's life, we find traces of the struggle in his mind to do justice to Bentinck, while he favoured Keppel

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Nov. 8, 1698.

I have acquainted your Grace with the methods I was obliged to take with my informer Paul Robinson. Messengers have been employed ever since Saturday to find out the persons he mentioned, according to his own directions; but of above twenty he had named, not one was found in the places where he said they lived, and his excuse is, that he had never been at any of their houses; but Johnson, one of their club, had told him where they lived, and yet this Johnson is no more to be found than any of the rest. However, I have taken three of the persons named, viz.: Davis, who was known to Chancey the messenger, as a friend of George Higgons. I have examined him, who says he remembered Robinson when he was a servant for Higgons, but he had not seen him these six months; and he positively denied that he knew any of the rest of the club, except Mr. Higgons, whom he had not seen these six weeks.

The other two taken up, are Mr. Davenport, a gentleman of an estate at Brentford, and Sir Richard Danton, who formerly lived at Isleworth; but I hear he hath been several months with Mr. Conyers, the lawyer, who is a member of Parliament. I would not examine these, or any more if they can be found, but reserved them for the Lords Justices.

Having informed my Lord Chancellor on Sunday

last of my proceedings, I laid the matter this morning before all the Lords Justices, who, having heard the several informations read, that Robinson had sworn to, he was sent for in, and owned all he had sworn to be true; but my Lord Chancellor examining him upon particulars, he had forgot many of the names he had told me of, at his first coming to me, and denied that he knew any such persons; and he gave such a stammering account of what had passed, that I think there is little doubt left but he has been forging a plot, though I cannot imagine what he should propose to himself by it. The best of his plea was an impudent assertion, that if it were not for our impatience, they might all have been seized at the club together, and that he offered to contrive it so. That latter part is true enough; but he never thought of it till he found I would not part with him. Their Excellencies are well satisfied that I staid as long as such a business was fit to be ventured.

The examining him took up so much time, that their Excellencies have deferred till to-morrow to confront him with the persons taken up, and by that time I shall have more of them. I believe they will go to the bottom of it, for it is pretty well known how glad the Duke of Bolton is when he hears any thing against the Higgons. So that he would never let go a plot wherein they were named any how; but I suppose this will be made so foul, that nobody will care much to meddle with it, and if there be any thing in it, all will be done to his hand.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Nov. 10, 1698.

The Lords Justices spent four or five hours in examining Paul Robinson, and confronting him with the persons who had been taken up on his account. Their names are Lady Smith, of Isleworth; Sir Richard Danton, who formerly lived at Isleworth, but removed from thence, a twelvemonth since, to Mr. Conyer's, in Essex; Mr. Davenport, who lives beyond Brentford, near Sion House, the master of the Bell Inn, at Isleworth; Simmonds, that keeps the Pope's Head Tavern, in Lombard-street, at whose houses Robinson informed the clubs had been kept; Captain Evans, of Blackheath, and one Davies. These were all the persons that could be found, or any way heard of, of the great number he had named.

He had sworn there was a meeting at the Bell in Isleworth, about the beginning of October, where he saw the persons then present subscribe some 100*l.*, some 200*l.*, for carrying on King James's service. Those he named were my Lady Smith, Lord Brudenell, Sir Richard Danton, Mr. Davenport, and Samuel Smith, a son of my Lady Smith.

I asked him at the beginning whether he did not know my Lord Brudenell was dead; then he said it was one very like him: they called him my Lord,

and he signed L. B. for Lord Brudenell. When he was confronted severally with the rest, he said, those were not the persons mentioned in his papers. He knew them all very well, he had been bred up by Mr. Davenport, and lived with him seven years. The persons he had deposed against he had never seen any where but at the clubs, only he stood out against Evans and Davies, that they had been at all the meetings he mentioned. One of them was at Evans's house at Blackheath. But Evans denies to have seen him above once since they were in the gate-house together for the last plot, and then he met him accidentally in the street; Robinson charging him positively that he was at the Pope's Head on Friday last, that being within memory. Evans has undertaken to prove that he did not stir from Blackheath all that day, and the like charge being against Davies, he says he can prove his being elsewhere at that time, and denies to have seen Robinson these six months.

Robinson said he had seen Simmonds, who keeps the Pope's Head, three or four times at the meetings that were there, and he will prove that he hath been at the Bath all the time, and did not return till Friday last. The master of the Bell denies that any of the persons named were ever at his house, so all were discharged except Evans and Davies, and Robinson is continued in close custody.*

* * * * *

* A part wanting.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Nov. 12, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 9th, and think I have escaped very well with my discoverer, by securing him before he left me in the lurch.

The Lords Justices sent for him yesterday, to let him understand how palpable his perjuries were, and to give an opportunity, if he would be ingenuous enough, to declare how he came to commit such a villany; whether his necessities had prompted him to it, and whether he had any advisers or assisters in it. At first he would have gone on in his old impudence, and said, if he had but two or three days time allowed him for the apprehending two men named Flint and Warrener, they would tell where Johnson might be met with, and then the truth would appear; but questions being put to him about those two men, he gave such contradictions, and nonsensical accounts, that it was a further confirmation the fellow was not capable of speaking one word of truth.

After some pressing, he came out with it very sheepishly, that his necessities had put him upon the project of accusing, for want of the money that was owing to him, partly from Higgons, and partly from others; that nobody had advised him to do it, and he had communicated it to nobody; that he never expected to appear face to face with the per-

sons he had accused, resolving to get out of the way as soon as he had spoke to me once more. This came from him stupidly, and without remorse or any sense of the heinousness of his crime, only he thought he was bewitched. Their Excellencies have ordered that he be speedily prosecuted, and in the most exemplary manner. Accordingly, I committed him last night to Newgate for a conspiracy against the lives of his Majesty's subjects, by falsely accusing them, upon an oath, of high treason, in compassing or imagining the death and destruction of the King. Mr. Attorney will file an information against him this term.

I am hardly out of my fright yet, when I consider the precipice I stood upon so long; for if he had given me the slip, he had left me such a load, that I know not how I should have stood under it.

I know not whether I have not such another discovery made me this evening. A Scotchman tells me, that one of his countrymen hath imparted to him a design of attacking the King, only with seven or eight, with short blunderbusses under their coats, and he was pressed to be concerned, and ran a great risk in it. But it seems he met his man accidentally, and parted with him again, so he knows his name only, and not his place of abode.*

* Shortly after this letter was written, Shrewsbury visited London, induced to do so partly by the urgent requests of Wharton and Montague, partly by the hope of meeting the King on his return, and resigning the seals, and partly by the hope of receiving relief from the advice of some new physician who had been strongly recommended to him. He was rather injured, however, than restored by the experiment, and had returned to Eyford before the 25th of the same month.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Nov. 29, 1698.

I hope that your Grace got well to Eyford, and that your illness is going off. We have now an easterly wind, and may expect to hear of his Majesty's landing on Thursday or Friday next. It might otherwise have happened, that some of the members would be going home again, as not expecting there would be a session before Christmas. There is a great appearance of members in town, and strong caballing about the Speaker. Some have printed a paper against Sir Thomas Littleton and Sir Edward Seymour, that one is a courtier, and the other would be one if he were employed again.

We have likewise a new pamphlet come out against a standing army, as is supposed from the same club. It is not writ with the same spirit as the last, but all is heaped up they could think of, both for decrying the army and the ministry. I send your Grace the papers for your entertainment.

The easterly winds have sent me back Sir William Jennings. He writ me a letter yesterday from Deal, to let me know how near he was to have been cast away; but that he would venture it again as soon as the wind changed. It will concern him, for he will run no less danger ashore, as well from his debts as from the law, his creditors having of late been very inquisitive after him.

It was whispered about this morning, as if the

party would set up Sir Christopher Musgrave for Speaker, and that Seymour and Granville would join in it. He is not yet come to town, but they say he is on the way. I hardly believe he would undertake it if it were less doubtful; but they compute there are 284 that may be depended on for Sir Thomas Littleton.

We have letters this day from Ireland, but no bills yet. I enclose a copy of Mr. Methuen's letter, which gives an account of the heats and confusions they are in. I suppose we are least to have only a show of supply from there. Having a concern upon me in relation to the public, I can't forbear troubling your Grace with it. I have endeavoured to recommend Mr. Hopkins to the Lords of the Treasury for a small employment in the Custom-house, as an addition to his place in the office, which is scarce a sufficient encouragement of itself for the attendance required. I found a very great coldness in Mr. Montague and Mr. Smith, and I understand by Sir Thomas Littleton (who is a great friend of Mr. Hopkins), that it arises from a jealousy they have of me,* as if I were neither their friend, nor cared for the party. They would have him believe

* This jealousy was of some standing, though Vernon did not know it. In the first place, he had been the man to suggest Methuen for the Irish Chancery, and that gentleman, to use the expression applied to him by Lord Somers, was "equally the aversion of Whigs and Tories." In the next place, by the influence of Sunderland, one great object of enmity to the existing Cabinet, he had been put into the office of Secretary to the exclusion of Wharton. So strong was this jealousy, that Lord Somers endeavoured, in a letter of 16th August, to prejudice Shrewsbury himself in regard to Vernon, or rather to shake his confidence in the discretion, if not the fidelity, of his long tried friend.

that if the King is not for his being Speaker, I must be the man to turn him, since they shall all give their opinions for him; and a further ground of jealousy is, that I am a friend to Methuen. Since these gentlemen are pleased to have so ill opinion of me, I am glad they have no worse cause to assign; for the first I am sure they are wholly mistaken in, Sir Thomas Littleton being as sure of me as he is of himself, he making no difficulty to own that he would not be put up for Speaker if the King did not approve of it. And at a meeting one day at Mr. Montague's upon this occasion, I not only asked Sir Thomas whether he were resolved to be in the house that day, for I thought the resolutions of others would depend upon it; but I am sure I have laboured as sincerely as any body, to dispose all I could towards making this choice, and have had no doubts but it would be at the King's good liking. As to Mr. Methuen, I have no particular reasons to be either his friend or his enemy, as I told Sir Thomas; but that I had a natural compassion for any one that I saw marked out for ruin, and did not know how soon it might be my own case. I was sensible what a disadvantageous character people lay under, who are said to be recommended by my Lord Sunderland; and I wished people would make more candid judgements, or otherwise I know not how far it would go, since there are but few now in employment, that had not his help in obtaining them, at least, he pretending that they owe him that obligation. I see no reason why any one should be angry with me on

either of those accounts; I know myself unfit to give the King advice, and therefore I shall never presume to offer it. I am as sensible it is not in my power to do any man a service, I know not therefore why I should suffer on that account. I cannot but have perceived that I was disagreeable from the beginning, which I do not wonder at, and therefore laboured all I could not to come into this post, and am still ready to go out of it. I always feared it would be ruinous, as making me incapable to get bread any other way; but that I think is hard, and what I have no way deserved. Sir Thomas Littleton being so kind to me as to give me this account this morning, I told him I would speak to the Lord Chancellor about it, who, though he was more their friend than mine, I knew would judge equitably and with candour. I thought he would either cure those gentlemen of their fancies, or give me his assistance, that I may go off without any noise, and give no obstruction to the public business, which is unavoidable when managers are out of humour. Sir Thomas approves of it, and intends to speak likewise to my Lord Chancellor himself. I wish they may be easy any way, and meet with no greater disturbance than my behaviour gives them.

Paul Robinson has pleaded guilty to the information brought against him; the sentencing is put off to the next term. Mr. Attorney not expecting this plea, was not prepared to open the nature and extent of his crimes.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Dec. 1, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 26th November. I am sorry you find yourself no better since your coming into the country. I hope a little rest, and good open weather, will put you into the condition you were in before you took your journey.

I have not heard of Fuller since he left Newcastle, and know not what is become of him. If it be the Newcastle men he hath cheated, there is a good deal of their own fault, for they have had warning enough, and made a very ridiculous use of it. If I hear again of this fellow, and find sufficient proof against him, I shall not stick to get him prosecuted.

I waited on my Lord Chancellor yesterday, as I acquainted your Grace I would. He told me he was surprised to hear the account I gave him, and endeavoured to soften it several ways. He did not think there was so much in it as Sir Thomas Littleton reported, who, he said, was a very honest man; but it was his way to add something of his own. He did not disown but he had heard last winter that it was taken notice of, as if there was a more than ordinary familiarity between the Speaker, Mr. Harley, and myself; but that he had told them

there was no umbrage to be taken at it, for if the King had a mind to send any message to either of them, he would not want ways of doing it, and they ought to be better satisfied that it was done by me than Mr. Guy. I thanked his lordship for the candour of his interpretation, but I scarce remembered that I was ever employed in any such messages. I had occasion to say some very indifferent things to the Speaker, but it was not my way to be repeating them again to others, and I did not know I had given so much jealousy as to make it necessary. I remember Mr. Harley would now and then take the humour of sitting by me in jest, and said he did it to blast my reputation. I did not think he was so near speaking truth. He employed me once to get a friend of his excused from being Sheriff in Wales, and another to be put into his place, whom I suppose he had greater reliance upon. The King was inclined to do it, but Mr. Montague took it up so warmly, that he was removed, and yet they recommended one that Mr. Harley was more satisfied with.

My Lord Chancellor told me he would be my compurgator as to Sir Thomas Littleton, and thought these jealousies more fit to be removed, and asked me whether I would propose any thing he could do in it. But that I declined, and only said in general that I knew the worth and usefulness of those two gentlemen, I should always preserve an esteem and

respect for them; but I wished they would be a little kinder to their friends, and less severe in the censures. But if other suspicions were spread further, and others had the same jealousies of me, my being in this post would be but an obstruction to the public business. I should be very well contented to retire, and make room for any more agreeable to them. I had told his Lordship, that Sir Thomas Littleton intended himself to give him an account of this affair, which he laid hold of, and said he would speak to Sir Thomas Littleton, and then consider what he would say to these gentlemen.

I shall be sorry if I have put too great a difficulty upon his Lordship; but I thought I was not to sit still under such undeserved suspicions, and I could not make it known in a softer manner. If these jealousies can be removed, one may live easier some time longer. If the attempt does only provoke these gentlemen's resentments, I know my Lord Chancellor must be on their side; and nobody (myself not excepted), would advise him otherwise; but then I hope I shall have my ease some other way. I am prepared for all events; ruin may fall upon me, but it shall not surprise me.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 6, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 3rd, and am very sensible of the favour done me by your writing to my Lord Chancellor. I hope it may keep some gentlemen from relapses. But the present disgust was accommodated yesterday morning. By this accident I waited for the King's coming to Kensington on Sunday night, which was about eleven o'clock, and I think I was the only person he then spoke to about business, though my Lord of Canterbury, Lord Privy Seal, and the Earl of Marlborough were there also, but the King bid me stay till after he had supped, and the rest went away. He then asking me how it stood as to the Speaker, I gave him the best account of it I could, both as to the prospect there was of Sir Thomas Littleton's carrying it, and how the other party were divided whom they should choose, and I added what I thought proper concerning Sir Thomas Littleton's fitness for the place, and his deference to his Majesty's pleasure. I found the King very inclinable to him, and disposed to do whatever should be most advisable as to the Parliaments sitting on Tuesday or not. His Majesty had before appointed the Cabinet Council to meet, in order to consider whether there should be a further prorogation. Upon

this I went yesterday morning to my Lord Chancellor, and told him what had passed, and offered it as my opinion that the Parliament should not be put off, since I found our friends against delays. I perceived his Lordship was entirely of that mind, and desired me to find out my Lord Orford and Lord Wharton, to know their sentiments. I met with them at Kensington together with Mr. Montague, Mr. Smith, and Sir Thomas Littleton. They had been talking together of the same thing, and only Mr. Smith backward, who feared it would be looked upon as a trick, that the prorogation resolved only at the Council on Saturday should be superseded. But upon further discoursing the matter, they all agreed it was best the Parliament should meet next day. My Lord Chancellor came soon after, and was half an hour with the King in his closet. When the Cabinet met, his Lordship acquainted the King what was done on Saturday, but that the advice came of his Majesty's arrival before the writ was sealed, so that act was void, and either the Parliament must meet, or the Council be summoned to order a new writ. As to the conveniency of this meeting, it was referred to those that were members of the House of Commons, and Mr. Montague and myself giving an opinion for it, it was resolved the Parliament should meet next day; that at that time directions only should be given to choose a Speaker, that he should be presented on Friday, and then the King would speak to both Houses.

When the Council was up† * * * * *, took occasion to tell my Lord Orford and Mr. Montague, how instrumental I had been in the accomplishment of their desires, and gave me a larger share of it than I pretended to, whereupon the tide turned immediately, and I was loaded with compliments, and assurances of friendship. I told Mr. Montague I was glad to see him altered in his opinion of me, but I had always pursued the same point in relation to Sir Thomas Littleton, and every thing else that was for their service, though I had the misfortune not to be rightly understood.

I did not omit acquainting the King with your Grace's desires to be discharged of the seals, and the hazard you ran in endeavouring to make that request yourself, and what an ease it would be to your mind to be dismissed without incurring his Majesty's displeasure. His Majesty shewed no reluctance to it, but said he would speak to me about it another time, and asked many questions how you came to be taken ill, and whether you were not better since you went away.

I waited on the King last night, and pressed again your Grace's being discharged. He said he was not against gratifying you; he would have you eased of the seals, since you were so weary of them, but he should be glad not to lose your service in some other station, and asked if you would not take the Cham-

† Something wanting, probably "the Lord Chancellor."

berlain's Staff, which he thought it time to dispose of. My answer was, that I believed your Grace could not think of meddling with any employment while you were not in a condition of health to discharge the duty of it. Upon the whole, I think his Majesty will suspend giving his orders about the Seals, till he knows your mind about the Staff.

My Lord Portland likewise talked to me after the same manner, and urged your accepting the Staff, as what would put the King very much at ease, and that you would be obliged to no attendance till your health was perfectly established; that the King would be under difficulties as to this office, if it were not given to you. I said all I could to him to put him off from it, that if they would let you alone till you were well, I was confident the King might command your service, either with or without an employment. He still stuck to his point, that this would give you no disturbance, and you would be no more tied by it than you thought fit yourself.

His Majesty came to the House of Lords to-day, and the Commons being sent for, were directed to choose a Speaker. My Lord Hartington first moved and proposed Sir Thomas Littleton, which was seconded by my Lord Spencer and others, Sir John Rolles began the opposition, who said Sir Thomas was an able and an honest man, but he excepted against one in that station for reasons given in the printed considerations, which was urged more virulently by Mr. Beyerly, with reflections on the Trea-

sury, who was answered by Mr. Pelham, he desiring that speech might be made when there was a Speaker, that they might vindicate themselves from such aspersions. Lord Norris and Mr. Hammond carried on the debate, and were answered by Mr. Montague, Mr. Smith, &c., but the naming any competitor was all along avoided, and yet they would not suffer Sir Thomas Littleton to be brought to the chair, without a question which others said was unusual and unnecessary, unless any other person was proposed; but Sir Edward Seymour interposing, that there was no other way of deciding there but by a question, Sir Richard Onslow, who was for Sir Thomas, came into it, and the question was put very much to Sir Thomas's advantage. He carried it by a majority of 107. It would have been by one more, had not he voted against himself. The division was of 242 against 135. Then he adjourned the House to Friday.

I have been sent for to Kensington this evening, about writing into Ireland; and upon my moving his Majesty about the Seals, he gave me leave to bring them to him to-morrow or next day. He bid me likewise know of your Grace, whether you would take the Chamberlain's Staff, and said it smilingly, that he believed you would not care for it. I think this ought to satisfy your Grace, that if the King parts with you, it is not his pleasure, but quite the contrary. Though I can carry the Seals to-morrow, yet I shall defer it till I hear from you again, for I

believe you will think it proper that I should deliver to his Majesty, at the same time, a letter from you of thanks for your discharge. This is a sad office I am going to perform, but willingly submit to it as it is most agreeable to the person I have the highest honour for.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Dec. 8, 1698.

I was so full of what I had to write to your Grace about the last post, that I made no answer concerning Mr. Broderick, though I observed in what manner your Grace espoused his interest. I find he has made the best of his case, and he has concealed that his pressing the Lieutenant-Governor about the oaths had a good deal of mixture of private piques and passion, which appeared by his and the Chief Justice coming over to follow their blow, in order to make the government vacant, that their friend might fill it. But before they arrived, Sir W. Beeston's case was laid before the King at the Cabinet Council, and upon a report of the Council of Trade, it was thought fit not to take any advantage of the Governor's short omission, since he recovered himself so soon, and took the oaths. I think his scruples did not deserve any harsh censure, they no way relating to the King or the Government, but about observing Acts of Parliament relating to trade, which were

not, as he thought, sufficiently specified; and at first sight looked like† * * * with * * *

The King has taken notice to my Lord Chancellor, and my Lord Marlborough, that he will receive your Seals; whereupon I told them, that I staid only for your letter to be presented at the same time, which they very well approve of. My Lord Chancellor hinted to me the great concern your Grace has been pleased to express on my behalf, which I am infinitely obliged by. He intends to return you an answer upon it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Dec. 10, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 7th, and am expecting your answer to what I writ on Tuesday. I have told Mr. Yard that I should call upon him for the Seals, which he is ready to deliver.

Your Grace will see by the enclosed speech of his Majesty, how the sessions opened yesterday. Sir Thomas Littleton was likewise approved, and these two days have been spent in taking the oaths and signing the association at the table. Sir Thomas Littleton executed himself pretty laboriously, and is rather thought to have overdone it; and he accepted a little flatteringly, saying "as the King had done

† Several words wanting.

many impossibilities, he might do another in enabling him to discharge the place;" and added a Latin verse, which I think is of his own making:—

"Non habeo ingenium, Cæsar cum jussit habebo."

My Lord Chancellor made him a neat and pertinent compliment in giving the reasons his Majesty had for approving him.

I suppose a little will be done more on Monday than reading a bill, settling the committees, reporting the King's speech, and, perhaps, receiving some petitions, among which Sir Harry Colt has one to offer, all his endeavours for an accommodation being ineffectual.

The King's speech is very well liked, my Lord Chancellor has drawn it so as to satisfy the King, and has given no handle for cavilling. It is left to the Parliament to consider what land force they will keep up, and all is laid before them that may induce a compliance with the King's desires; but I am afraid there is no great disposition in the house to allow of more than 10,000 men, if they can now be brought to it. It is likewise a further question, whether the Dutch regiments shall be of that number. It will be strongly opposed, and perhaps but faintly supported, and go off without a division, lest the great majority appear on the other side. If this rub did not lie in our way, I do not see but this sessions might go smoothly enough. We have letters from Ireland to-day of the 3rd and 4th. The House

of Commons had provided the remaining 19,000*l.*, and also 33,000*l.* for finishing the barracks, by laying an additional penny per pound upon tobacco, and retaining the other duties thereon till the year 1703. This bill was likewise come to the council, and both would be sent over on Monday last, so that we are in hourly expectation of them. Mr. Methuen has yet some hopes that both the Linen and Woollen Bills, which went from hence, may pass; but they are fickle, so that he can promise nothing. The Parliament adjourned on Saturday last to the 20th instant.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Dec. 13, 1698.

If your Grace places your satisfaction in being out of business, you are now at ease, for last night I delivered the Seals of your office to his Majesty, and left them in his closet. I presented, at the same time, your Grace's letter, which his Majesty read over, and said it was obligingly writ, and then gave it me to read; the remark I made upon it was, that it had as much sincerity in it as respect. I think your Grace has parted with your employment in the manner you wished, but I conclude it will never be so well filled again. I do not know whom the King intends it for, but at present others decline recommending any one to him. It is not unlikely, therefore, that it may remain undisposed of this winter.

I took the occasion to mention to the King, that in course one succeeded another, but it had not been always so, and I thought it was unadvisedly done in a late instance of Sir John Trenchard, and therefore I should not think of removing till I knew whom his Majesty designed. I had envy enough upon me in the lower post, and should be very well contented not to increase it. The King thought I ought to remove, and the course should not be broken; but afterwards he said he would consider it when I urged that there might be Lords Justices appointed again, and I supposed the person his Majesty would make choice, might be fit to be of that commission, and it would be but a confusion if he had not the office where they met.

I hope your Grace will not condemn this as a sneaking behaviour, and not knowing what is one's due. I think I have pretty well considered what belonged to my circumstances, and I will have nothing of ambition to answer for.

The King telling me he would have the correspondences kept up that are managed by Monsieur Jurieu. I desired I might have the allowance for it till another Secretary was named, as also that the under clerks of that office might have their salaries continued till they have a new master, which I think is granted.

My Lord Chancellor moved the King on Sunday on behalf of Mr. Yard, and he will have 500*l.* for attending the Lords Justices.

I wish the King were as much at ease as your Grace. He hath his heart set upon keeping up the present force, and there seems to be an irresistible current against it, enough to bear down all foreign troops, as well the Dutch as French.

The Irish bills came last night, and this day will be reported at Council.

I send your Grace a list of the bills. The public ones were read this night, and approved of without any amendments.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 15, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 12th. I hope your Grace is satisfied with the provision made for Mr. Rowley at present, till another Secretary is named, when I shall use my endeavour that he may come into the station he last enjoyed, which will be much better than any thing I have to offer him, or otherwise he shall never want what I can gratify him with.

Sure my Lord Romney is misinformed if he hears that an impeachment will be on Kidd's account. There is a talk as if some had a mind to have a fling at my Lord Orford, but I hope it will be impotent malice. If it comes to that, they will lie heavier on the treasure he got in the Mediterranean, than what he expected from the East Indies.

Mr. Heathcote and the merchants have been with me about Mr. Broderick. I saw they were beginning to aggravate matters against him, and had no mind to come to any accommodation. I cut it short, and told them that Mr. Broderick desired no more than if there were any charge against him which amounted to the forfeiture of his office, that he might be allowed to justify himself. They said that would be made appear, and offered to put it into articles, which I left them to do, Mr. Broderick, the last time I saw him, insisting on his innocence, and desiring only to be fairly heard. He would have made me the compliment of it, but I told him, if that were necessary, I might upon his petition get him heard by the Commissioners of Trade. He is not very fond of that bar, but I know of no other in these cases. Besides he is a pretty unsteady man, and scarcely knows his own mind two days together. But I think the least friendship I can do him under these circumstances, is, that if the charge be brought home, and like to be well proved, I will advise him not to expose himself further, and if the objections are of no weight, I can the better press them not to be too clamorous, or he may be relieved if they are; and then he may either go himself or resign to his nephew.

I have letters to-day from Mr. Stanhope, writ to Mr. Yard, about the King of Spain's having declared the Electoral Prince of Bavaria his successor, and his Queen to be Regent during his minority.

The news was so surprising, that the French knew not what to make of it, but seem nettled at it. They had formerly threatened Spain that they would make war upon them, if they disposed of the succession to this pretender.

I know not whether this will be an argument to-morrow for keeping up our number of troops, but it will be necessary to find some good topics to induce that persuasion, which the Commons are at a great distance from, as appeared by yesterday's debate, when they stopped the motion for a supply, till they had been in a committee to consider of the army both in England and Ireland; and, that nothing might stop them in it, the two paymasters were ordered to lay before them a list of the forces in both kingdoms. They seem to be in a retrenching humour, so that I wish we may keep our last years ——* of 350,000*l.* One side shew violence, and the other side do not care to lose their credit in the House of Commons by a further opposition. Whether the King's expectations will be answered, is not to be seen at present.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 17, 1698.

The House of Commons have made quick work with the forces. They resolved yesterday in the

* A word wanting.

Committee, that the army in England should be reduced to 7,000 officers and servants included, which was agreed to-day, and a bill is to be brought in accordingly, by Mr. Harvey, who made the motion.

They have done better this day with Ireland, where they have allowed there, a number not exceeding 12,000. They have taken care there shall be no foreigners in either kingdom, and in England there are not to be so much as Scots in the regiments.

The Committee yesterday would in all probability have come up to 10,000 men for England, if any had had authority to propose it, and that the managers had come warmly into it; but it now was as the last year, that his Majesty would not declare himself on that point, thinking less than the present number insufficient. Others likewise were in the reserve, and though Sir Charles Sydley mentioned 10,000, it was but faintly seconded; and there being no prospect what number would be fixed on if the 7,000 was rejected, people came into it without a division: but after a pretty long debate, spent only in inquiries, how they could think 7,000 sufficient for the guards and garrisons, my Lord Ranelagh made a mistaken calculation, as if 3,000 men might suffice for the garrisons, and they supposed the rest would be enough for guards. Sir Richard Onslow was insinuating that there might be help from the marines towards serving the dockyards.

If after all this the Whigs be under a disreputation as supporters of any army, they are very unfortunate, since at Court they are blamed for giving it up.

The King is very uneasy at yesterday's resolution, and thinks it ruinous. I wish we do not find ourselves unsafe at home and slighted abroad.

I know not whether there may be any remedy by the bill. At least they make difficulty of allowing a regiment for Guernsey and Jersey, with a regiment or two for the plantations.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 20, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 17th, but am satisfied nothing can be done for Appleby. The quarrel he had was with a Commissioner of Taxes, which was resented at the Council Board, Sir Harry Goodrick laying it open with great warmth. He avoided a severe prosecution that was ordered, by being obliged to comply with the act for his banishment, and his bail were thereby discharged, or at least the cause suspended till his return. If after this he should have leave to come over, it would raise a mighty clamour, which it will not be fit to provoke on his account.

If your Grace pleases to let your goods remain as they are, you may do a kindness to your successor,

and part with them as advantageously. In the mean time, Tom Shorter will take the same care of them, since the clerks and servants will be still about the office. I hope it will not be long undetermined who shall have the office: my thoughts are my Lord Jersey will be the person. I believe the King would be glad to have some approbation of him from his ministers, but I know not whether that is to be expected, considering whom they have shewn their inclinations to.

Count Tallard arrived here on Saturday night; he came post from Dover. He saw the King on Sunday, and yesterday had a private audience. I have exchanged two or three words with him. He is pretty grave upon the business of Spain, and seems only concerned that it makes no alteration in the business agreed on. There is no doubt they look very jealously on this event, and suspect the King was privy to it. He says they knew some time since the Queen of Spain was negotiating this matter. There could not be a better trial of the French King's sincerity in observing the peace. If he sits still under this, he has a mind to be quiet the rest of his days. If his intentions are for disturbance, perhaps they will appear before we are too far gone in disbanding.

A design seems to discover itself in the House of Commons, of having a fling at my Lord Orford, and perhaps the whole Board of Admiralty. Mr. Harley and Mr. Foley made the motion yesterday, of going

into a grand committee to-morrow, to inquire into the navy accounts, which of them has been passed with vouchers, and which otherwise, that is by Privy Seal. This they say principally regards a victualling account of the flag, while it was under my Lord Orford's command in the Mediterranean, which the Commissioners of Victualling refused to pass, and it was therefore discharged by Privy Seal.

They say, likewise, there has been a squandering management in the navy, by additional salaries, and erecting new offices, that have cost the kingdom as much as the debt of the navy amounts to. I know not how all this will be made out, but I see a storm arising, which is enough to make men that do not aim at getting by their employments, better contented with their poverty.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 24, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 21st. I believe the generality of the nation, and the Parliament agree in what your Grace mentions concerning the army. I wish it were as well understood and liked at Kensington; but there it is considered how unsafe we shall be without a great force, and others argue, as if the greatest danger would arise from thence. While this controversy lasts, the ministers and managers have no very good time of

it, who are represented in the country as the supporters of an army, and perhaps are looked on at court, as having very much contributed to reduce it even below what was necessary.

The bill was read a second time yesterday, but before the vote passed for committing it, Mr. Montague spoke against the frame of the bill, that did not only disband the army, but the militia too; that in case of invasion from abroad or disturbance at home, every body was tied up from giving any assistance to the public, and that they declared the army disbanded by a blank day, before any provision was made for paying them. Mr. Harley answered him, and though he would not allow the objections to have much weight, yet he said whatever was in the bill might be altered in the Committee, except the number of men which the House had fixed to 7,000. Some thought that as fit to be recommended as any other part of the bill, but the debate fell, it being intended to revive it when the House is going into that Committee. Wednesday se'nnight is appointed for it, and therefore the call of the House is ordered the day before, and the House have adjourned till Monday se'nnight.

There will be some attempt to get some addition to the troops, to keep them within 10,000, and without insisting on foreigners; and yet even that is despaired of; if the King shall not be pleased to approve of those endeavours, so that country gentlemen may understand their departing from their

former resolution will be well accepted of, though it may not fully answer what his Majesty expected.

I think the King goes to Windsor on Monday, and will stay there most of next week.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 29, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 24th. I believe the office books may very well remain as they are, being in Mr. Yard's* custody, who still dispatches what he has to do at the office.

I think your Grace is now out of the reach of injuries. Those only who are in the possession of offices are to be tossed up and down. The aim at present is against commissioners, and therefore overlooks single persons. When they come to it, I know one they shall not need to have any great struggle with. I perceive my Lord Orford grows weary of being the mark, of being so often shot at, and talks of quitting as soon as he has justified himself. There needs not much to be done to make any body else of the same mind. I know not what we are running into. The King is dissatisfied to the highest degree, and with this model† of troops; he thinks the nation exposed to inevitable ruin. He blames the ministers for their easy giving way to it, and is not like to approve of 10,000, more than

* At this time Under Secretary. † So written.

7,000. But, however, they will use their utmost endeavours to retrieve that point, and hope he will be better satisfied when it is done.* If they miscarry in it, their enemies will have a still greater advantage against them, and their friends will be fewer, but what is really necessary for the kingdom, ought to weigh down all other considerations.

I shall be sure to take no notice of what your Grace writes concerning the Chamberlain's Staff. I see no likelihood of that Lord's having either of the employments. I know not what things may change to, but at present there is a prospect only of confusion. I would to God this point of the forces was over, and well settled, that every one might receive a calmness of mind, and we may know upon what foot we stand. I believe there never was any government more out of frame than we are at this time.

The King went to-day to Windsor, intending to stay there some time.

* The King, as he naturally might be, was indignant in the highest degree at the manner in which the Whigs had trifled, not only with his wishes, but with the safety of the country. He now beheld in the most painful light, what has ever been seen in England, a nation torn to pieces by the struggles of party : and, flowing from that cause, a flood of evil measures which happily are in general but temporary, and from the midst of which, borne up by every selfish, pitiful, and detestable feelings, are arising from time to time some solitary, but durable institution ; grand, magnificent, and good, proving how, by the will of Providence, good springs continually from evil. On the day that Vernon wrote this letter to Shrewsbury, Lord Somers also wrote, informing him that the King had taken a positive resolution to abandon England to her fate, and retire to Holland.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Dec. 29, 1698.

I should have nothing to send to your Grace this post, were it not for the inclosed letter of my Lord Chancellor. His Majesty is still at Windsor, and is not expected back till Saturday. My Lord Marlborough is gone thither to-day. I wish his Majesty could bring himself to be a little better satisfied with what the Parliament shall order about the troops; but at present the reducing the number, and the sending away the Dutch, is very grievous to him.

I think we have at last got rid of Madame Richelieu; I hope by this time she is landed at Ostend. She changed her mind very often since she went, from pretending to go sometimes for France, and sometimes for Flanders; but I think her real design was to slip back hither again, but I kept a pretty close eye upon her, and prevented it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Dec. 31, 1698.

The King is expected this evening at Kensington. He hath been a little out of order, having had some grudgings of an ague; but I hope it will not continue when he leaves that sharp air. People's pulses

have been felt as to increasing the number of the forces as far as 10,000 men, but there does not appear any hopes of carrying it. There are more that shew a tenderness towards the Dutch guards, and think it a hardship to deprive the King of them. But I don't see how they can be consistent with a very small number; if we had 10,000, and those included, I believe the nation would be more secure, and the King be better satisfied. At present we are under a great perplexity. Those that are convinced in their judgments that a greater force is necessary, are apprehensive of the ill consequences if such a question be carried against them upon a division, which fixes people in a party, so that no good is to be expected during the rest of the sessions. If it be not attempted, the King will be disobliged, and may be told if there were not more troops, it was because nobody pressed it. This dilemma is a little staggering. There will be more of the members in town on Monday and Tuesday, and perhaps they may then judge better of it. But if a thing be right and necessary, I think it should be ventured, let the consequences be what they will.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Jan. 3, 1698-9.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 31st past, and shall speak to Mr. Yard to give me

the book of passes, which they will have no occasion for, whatever they may have for any of the other books.

There went a report yesterday all over the House of Commons, that my Lord Godolphin was made Secretary, which the Whig party seemed mightily alarmed at. I am sure I have not elsewhere heard any thing of it, and though I do not particularly know my Lord Godolphin, yet I much question whether he be of a humour to accept it, especially as our present circumstances are. If we could prevail with one another to have a little more complaisance for the King, we should have less to apprehend of this kind; but he is so convinced of the necessity of having a better force than 7,000, and thinks it so great a hardship to be stripped of his guards, that he expects those who would serve the public, or gratify him, should exert themselves strenuously in these points; and he thinks the nation so much undone without a greater number, that all other services would be to no purpose. We shall see what to-morrow will produce. If the resolution be altered to 10,000 men, it must be by warmly contesting it, since the struggle is more for mastery than any thing else. The inquiry into the Admiralty affairs is put off till Thursday. I always thought the business of the army must go before it. They think it keeps us in awe as to a division, lest the majority that may be for lessening the forces, should stick together in all other points. Thus private interests influence the most public concerns.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Jan. 5, 1698-9.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 2nd, and have sent the inclosed to my Lord Coningsby.

We had the debate yesterday, whether there should be an instruction given to the committee to reconsider the number of the forces that were to be kept up, but with no better success than before, though the insufficiency of 7,000 were fully laid open; and Mr. Blathwayte was allowed to read of a paper a state of the garrisons, amounting to 5,000 men, which was not argued against that any of them could be spared. But Mr. Harley produced old establishments of King Charles, that made the guards and garrisons less than 7,000. There were three persons spoke against augmenting the numbers, which were alone sufficient; we gave up the cause. Those were my Lord Hartington, Mr. Pelham, and Sir Richard Onslow. Mr. Montague spoke for the† * * * * and very well, but Mr. Smith said nothing. Neither of them were for dividing, as thinking that would be to no purpose, and they have all along feared this occasion of disuniting. Therefore the question was declared in the negative against the instruction upon the cry of the house.

† A word wanting, probably "instruction."

We had our foreign mails last night. Sir Joseph Williamson writes me word, that in Holland, upon our disbanding resolutions, they think us distracted. Whether this matter is capable of remedy I know not, but they say some are relenting, and would give a greater number in another way, that is, by doubling the number of the marines. If they would make them 6,000, two-thirds would man the garrisons, and another third would serve at sea, and then the 7,000 men might be applied wholly to the guards and a body of horse. I would be glad they would do it, because the safety of the kingdom seems to require it, and the King be better satisfied; but I see no great reason to hope it, for it is the number they pretend to be frightened at, as dangerous to liberty, and their being called marines does not make them less soldiers.

We have been in a committee this day for the bill; the blank for the time of disbanding is filled up with the 26th of March next, and they are put in mind they must take care they are first paid.

We are not so strict in the qualifications of those that remain. They are still to be natural born subjects; but the kingdom of England is left out, so that Scotch or Irish may serve.

There is to be an exception to the militia, that they may not be understood to be disbanded, and they were asked whether the marines were not to be excepted likewise. But to that no direct answer was made by the leaders of this reform. They only

said they would be considered in another place as hitherto belonging to the fleet, only my Lord Coleraine's son, and Sir Thomas ——, said they did not like the marines, and saw no use of them. This does not look much like an intention to double them, and yet I think they will not prevail to take them all away; but there is nothing we are not capable of, except it be of preserving ourselves.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Jan. 10, 1698.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 7th. We go on towards disbanding without any stop that I can see is like to be made. The committee yesterday voted a supply to be granted to his Majesty, and the house agreed to it this day unanimously. It is not to be doubted but they intend that the first money raised shall be applied to disband the forces, and to that end the Earl of Ranelagh and Lord Coningsby's estimate, of what is in arrear to the army, is to be laid before that committee, which is appointed to sit to-morrow to consider further of the supply.

My Lord Orford's friends are against any longer putting off the Admiralty inquiry, though others shewed their inclinations the other way, by naming some more papers that would be wanting; but it being the first business of the day, they went into a

committee upon it, Mr. Boyle being in the chair. By what I can judge, they will make little of it; the chief thing insisted on to-day was, why the Mediterranean squadron did not sail before September, since it was ordered in February, and some touches were given of the loss received, by the squadron not being at Cadiz when the galleons arrived. It was answered, they were stopped for want of money to pay the seamen. This produced a new query, what money remained in the Treasurer of the Navy's hands during that time on account of seamen's wages, though the Lords of the Treasury answered it off hand, that Lord Orford had no money on this account till they furnished it, toward the end of July out of the two millions subscription. Some other queries were likewise made about deductions for poundage, which is more Mr. Doddington's business to answer than my Lord Orford's, he claiming it as a perquisite belonging to his place. They think something will appear in the letters writ from the Navy Board to the Admiralty, which are therefore required.

Other questions were asked, what prizes were taken in the Mediterranean while the fleet was there, and how disposed of. It was answered by Mr. Montague and Sir Robert Rich, that they had heard him declare he had touched none of those prizes, but had ordered that all of them should be delivered to Consul ——, the agent for the prize-office at Cadiz. This committee is to sit again, but at this rate, they may as well let it alone. I think it was

but originally intended to help on the disbanding of the army, and that will now shift for itself.

One of the inclosed letters is from John Colt, who never fails to put in his claim when there is a vacancy in the Custom House. I just acquainted his Majesty with his pretensions, but he made me no answer. I suppose your Grace knows that Mr. Brydges hopes to get it by my Lord Portland's means.

I know not whom the other letter is from, but it should have been sent last post if I had come down to the office.

The King is not very right in his health. He neither eats nor sleeps so well as he used to do ; he cannot overcome himself under what he thinks a hard usage.

They have got the bills back in Ireland, and we shall soon see whether they will pass them.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Jan. 12, 1698-9.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 9th, but I do not see our case is at all mended. We pass on the disbanding bill, and the King seems resolved against it. Yesterday we were in a committee to consider of the supply, and immediately consented to Mr. Harley's proposal (the estimates being first read for form sake), that out of the supply should be granted to his Majesty the sum of 300,000*l.* for

disbanding the army, and other public occasions. It being supposed that this will be more than sufficient for disbanding. The resolution was reported this day, and readily agreed to. Then Mr. Foley declared it was not their intention to proceed immediately towards forming a bill for the money, but that the disbanding might not stop, he moved there should be a vote of credit to take up the money at interest; and the committee, who have the bill for disbanding the army before them, are empowered to prepare such a clause to be added to that bill; and accordingly, that committee is appointed to sit to-morrow, when I suppose they will finish the bill, and get leave to report it next day. It is very probable they will have it brought into the house engrossed on Monday; such is the haste we make to run into confusion.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Jan 17, 1698-9.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 15th, and shall forward the inclosed to Mr. Colt. I do not see what hopes he can have, if he does not prevail with the Treasury to recommend him.

I believe we shall put the Disbanding Bill off our hands to-morrow. It was reported yesterday, and then ordered to be engrossed. It is certain the King is still very uneasy at it, but what it will end

in I am not able to judge. Some of the House of Lords have a great mind to oppose it; but I suppose they will well consider before they come to a rupture with the House of Commons on so ticklish a point.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Jan. 19, 1698-9.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 16th, and have acquainted the King with Colonel Windsor's desire to be one of your Deputy-Lieutenants, which the King has approved of.

Mr. Fisher will never leave off his dark ways, which make people afraid to have any thing to do with him, though they were ever so well disposed otherwise; he got me to move the King that he might have a sum of money given him, besides his 5*l.* per week. I told him the King gave me no positive answer, and therefore I advised him to apply to my Lord Portland again, which I suppose he has not failed to do. And I have writ lately to my Lord Galway, to know why there has been no particulars sent over of lands to be granted to him, I think it might have been done long since, if he would give himself any assistance; but he is gaping after 3,000*l.* in ready money, upon pretence of paying debts, and that I think he will never obtain. I cannot agree with him in the cause he assigns for

being neglected: at least, I know nothing of it, nor can I imagine anybody ever gave him that reason.

We passed the bill for disbanding yesterday, but it was long debated for; the opposition to it was made with more vigour at first than has appeared hitherto in any of these debates, and beyond what was expected; many country gentlemen coming in voluntarily, and without any concert, to declare their dislike to so small a number. Among these were Sir William Blackett and Mr. Norton, who both spoke very handsomely and close to the purpose; there were likewise Sir John Mainwaring, Sir John Phillips, Colonel Cornwall, and Mr. Harvey a lawyer, Sir James Houlton, and others. We had likewise a division for it, which we need not be ashamed of, though we lost it, for we had 154 against 221. The other party did not intend to debate at all, but sat silent till eight or so had spoke; but they seeing themselves pelted from all corners of the house, came at last into the debate in their own defence. I think they persuaded none by their reasons, but their party were obstinate to their first resolutions; and yet I believe many are† * * *, and I think the marines are secured by that day's work. The bill was carried up to the Lords to-day with a great attendance. I fancy they will be puzzled to know what to do with it; they have put off the first reading of it till Tuesday next. The King is better

† Words wanting.

satisfied with the struggle of yesterday: what use he will make of it I do not know.

The Admiralty inquiry was to have come on to-day, but is put off till next week.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Jan. 21, 1698-9.

There is very little to trouble your Grace with by this post, the Lords have deferred the first reading of the Disbanding Bill till Thursday next. The Earl of Berkeley moved to put it off for a fortnight, which was a strange motion: if it had been followed, it is probable the Commons would have adjourned for the same time. My Lord Feversham was another that shewed his dislike of the bill: he said he did not fear troops, so much as arbitrary judges; and I know not what besides; but the lords of weight and good understanding are not yet come to declare their sense of the bill; those of them that wish for a greater number will hardly think it attainable by having a difference with the House of Commons on such a point. I suppose, before they pass the bill, they will desire a conference with the Commons upon the state of the nation in relation to its safety. If it be entered into, I know not what accommodation it may produce; but if the conference be refused, as it is very likely, since the Commons, calling this

a money bill, will be jealous of the Lords mending it under any pretence whatever. I see nothing so safe as the passing it, and when that is over, to renew the conferences, and make way for further considerations of the public security, which many gentlemen of the House of Commons are disposed to; if it be not entangled in a controversy with the Lords, which leaves no room for a free impartial debate. I have mentioned to your Grace that I thought the 3,000 marines out of danger; if there could be found a way of superadding the Dutch regiment of foot-guards, I am of opinion his Majesty would be well enough satisfied. I do not find but many are disposed to pay him this personal respect; but how practicable it is, I am not able to judge.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 24, 1698-9.

The Lords have read the Disbanding Bill this day the first time, and have appointed it a second reading on Friday next. My Lord Normanby was for putting it off till the Wednesday following. Little was said about it to-day; some that spoke shewed what, I suppose, will be the general sentiment, that though they do not like the bill, and think there is not a sufficient provision made for the public safety, yet they are persuaded that any difference between

the two Houses would be the worst way of coming at such further security as may otherwise be hoped for.

The Admiralty inquiry that was to come on to-day is put off till Saturday, by reason of Sir Robert Rich's being indisposed, who is the only person of that Board in the House that is depended on to give an account of what passed under their cognizance. This delay was not very easily obtained, Sir Edward Seymour opposing it. By this one may see that the promoters of this inquiry do not intend to dally with it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 31, 1698-9.

I have received the honour of your Grace's letter of the 28th, and am very sensible of your favour in the offer you are pleased to make me, which, though I had no intention of asking, it may prove a great kindness to me, if I meet with a convenient purchase that would be otherwise beyond my reach; and since it is indifferent to your Grace, I shall with less reluctancy accept of it.

Some things have turned out pretty extraordinarily since I last troubled you. The censure of the Board of the Admiralty, on Saturday last, though they are not named, is what I * * * * † when the

† The word expect is here written evidently by a mistake.

proofs were not more evident, as you will see by the inclosed, and may thereby judge what temper the House of Commons is in towards men in employments.

I cannot approve of Sir George Rooke's behaviour that day, who sat silent and voted against the question; one of his post and character should either have aggravated or * * * * the charge. I since hear that Priestman * * * and Kendall were the only persons that signed the order for providing those ships; Sir Robert was ill and could not attend that day. Mr. Sargesson, of the Navy Board, said nothing, and went away before the question. He is supposed to have given Mr. Foley his information.

The Lords read the Disbanding Bill the second time on Friday, and were in a committee upon it the next day. It was then that the bill was most argued against, as to the insufficiency of the numbers; but, at the same time, it was allowed to be more convenient not to reject it. My Lord Chancellor and my Lord Tankerville were the most copious on the subject; there has been no division during all the debates on the bill. It was this day read a third time. I suppose the King will come to the House to-morrow or next day to pass it; he will take that occasion to speak to both Houses to try if they will come to another temper in what much concerns their safety, and his satisfaction.

We have a piece of news from abroad which is yet more surprising, my Lord Portland having re-

ceived an account this morning, by express, of the death of the Electoral Prince of Bavaria.* What alteration that may make in public affairs, and some late transactions, nobody yet can imagine.

The House of Commons have resolved to go on Friday next into a committee of ways and means. It was proposed by Mr. Paget, and seconded by Mr. Harley; thus the management is passing into other hands. I pity Mr. Bridges, who has his cause coming on to a hearing, while a party is so strongly formed, though he fancies he shall be able to draw some of them off. We are endeavouring to retrieve ourselves by setting up the Rose Club again, which intends to meet on Thursday night.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 2, 1698-9.

The King came to the House of Lords yesterday, and passed the Disbanding Bill, with some other bills that were ready. After that he made the enclosed speech, which I hope may have some good effect. Many people seemed moved with it, and express an inclination to gratify the King in continuing the Dutch guards. If that good humour lasts, they cannot want the method to attain to it.

* One of the chief claimants to the Spanish succession, probably named by the King's will at this time as his universal heir, and generally reported to have been poisoned by some over-zealous partizan of Louis XIV.

We shall see more into it on Saturday next, when it is appointed to take the speech into consideration; and, in the mean time, we are preparing an address of thanks to his Majesty for his speech, which was moved by Sir John Mainwaring, as the day for considering it was by Sir Charles Hotham. Mr. Harley came into both the motions; if he be likewise earnest in promoting them the King may be more easy at last; the present number of marines with the Dutch guard would satisfy us. Without the concurrence of some of those gentlemen it would be difficult; they having still the lead. This day they were in a committee again upon the Admiralty, and Mr. Priestman* was singled out for having procured to himself about 400*l.* upon pretence of commanding a small squadron against the * * * *, towards the latter end of King Charles's reign. The question was, that an order of the Admiralty, bearing date the 12th September, 1695, giving unto Henry Priestman, Esq., an allowance of ten shillings per diem as commanding of a squadron against * * * * in the year 1684, from the date of his commission of Captain of the Bon Adventure, till the time the said ship returned and was paid off, ——† which was passed without a division. The last vote passed against the Admiralty was intended to charge them with

* The whole of this part of the letter regarding Priestman is nearly unintelligible. Many words are omitted as will be seen, which probably may be the cause of the confusion that prevails.

† It is probable that the words "be laid before the house," or others to that effect, have been omitted.

negligence, and this taxes them with partiality. Sir Robert Rich and Mr. Montague took some pains in this debate, but very few else shewed any concern for Priestman, and it is a little shameful, one in his station should rake up an old pretence to have an additional salary. It was said some others had the same, as Sir Richard Booth, Robinson, Wright, and Killegrew; but George Churchill showed the differences of the cases; that those had commanded squadrons of twelve ships, and were therefore entitled to this recompense by former establishments, but Priestman's command was not above half the number. This committee is to sit again on Monday next.

Mr. Bridges's petition against Sir Theophilus Oglethorpe was heard last night at the committee. If he had not a wretched cause of it, it was wretchedly managed, for it could admit of no debate, and was at last judged frivolous and vexatious.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February, 1698-9.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 29th. I have no more to say at present of Dr. Kingston, but it is certainly the safest and most reputable way to have little to do with him, but leave him to his old acquaintance, my Lord Lucas.

My Lady Westmoreland sent me a letter yesterday that she received from Mrs. Scott, applying to her as a friend of your Grace, and telling her she had it in her power now, to do your Grace a great piece of service; my lady desiring my opinion of her, and whether she should see her or not. I have sent her word that the woman's chief design is to get a little spending money. I thought, therefore, she might tell her messenger, who will call for an answer, that this is the first time she ever heard of her name, and if she had any thing to communicate to the duke, she would do well to write to him, whose directions my lady would expect if there were any thing she could serve him in. I think it very improper for this woman to trouble my lady; besides I think she knows nothing but what I hear in another way from her companion Read, who is mentioned in Kingston's book.

What we did yesterday in the House of Commons was to alter the resolutions of the committee as to laying a duty on the wrought silks and stuffs from India, which are now to be prohibited as to the wearing them here, and a bill is ordered to be brought in accordingly. Sir Christopher Musgrave and Mr. Harley stuck to their point of a duty; but Sir Richard Onslow and Mr. Pelham, with my Lord Coningsby, opposed it. Mr. Montague came at first half way towards them, and declared he would be for a prohibition if it could be made practicable, but that he doubted of; and therefore proposed sus-

pending any resolution till a bill of prohibition was framed and considered of. Sir Edward Seymour thought that a strange way about, and was rather for an immediate prohibition, which was closed, and there was no division on it.

The committee on elections, after three hearings of Sir Thomas Felton's cause, have last night voted him and Sir Charles Hedges unduly chosen, and have brought into their places Sir Edmund Bacon, and a brother of Sir Henry Johnson. There have been two or three very hard resolutions carried against Sir Thomas by the non-attendance of those who should have taken more care of him. We are a dispersed routed party, our opposers bear hard upon us, and we see no means to help ourselves. The counsel of the two last East India Companys were heard to-day at the bar, against committing the bill. There was no long debate after they were withdrawn * * * * * * †

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Feb. 9, 1698-9.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 5th. However reasonable it might be to gratify his Majesty with his guards, there appears no great disposition towards it, at least in public assemblies. It was discoursed of at the Rose Club on Saturday

† A part wanting.

night; but either out of dislike to it, or from an apprehension of being baffled, they were of an opinion not to attempt it, but thought it more advisable to put off the consideration of the King's speech to another day, which was not in their power, for the other party would have it take its course. It was read accordingly yesterday, and Mr. Harley was pretty quick in proposing, that for a further security of the nation, a bill should be brought in for better regulating the militia, which was readily closed with, as if it were a good deliverance from a debate, that was perhaps apprehended on all sides. What the house did afterwards in a committee in relation to the Admiralty enquiry, I take the liberty to give your Grace an account of by the inclosed. This I think may be called charging the Admiralty with proceeding arbitrarily, and by no rules but of their own making. How many other heads of accusation are behind I know not, but they shew a desire to proceed; and I believe they have something more to say to Aylmer, on account of Captain Price, commander of the Centurion, who was detained at Cadiz, and sent cruising with the merchants' money on board, and not suffered to come home till he had agreed with Aylmer to give him two-thirds of the profits of his voyage.

To be sure my Lord Orford must be uneasy at this questioning of his favourites; but, on the other side, there are mean things done by great men in office, and if the enquiry into it make men wiser or honester hereafter, it will not be time much mispent.

I cannot say but there are some things fit to be reformed, and it is hardly to be done at present, but by parliament. It would be better, indeed, that parliament reformed themselves, and save that trouble to others; but corruption and partialities have taken fast hold of us.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Feb. 9, 1698-9.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 8th inst., and refer you for our parliament affairs to the inclosed, and shall only add, that the report of Mr. Bridges's election came on to-day: it was laboured hard to disagree to the resolution as frivolous and vexatious; but it was carried in the affirmative by 159 against 134. The Lords have been to-day laying more express commands upon my Lord Peterborough and my Lord Orford, that they should not fall into a quarrel,—being told what they did yesterday would not be sufficient to prevent it. They have now engaged their words to be very quiet; and it is reported that Lord Peterborough should brand Lord Orford with being a * * * and a coward, but he denies to have said so; however, it was something very gross. My Lord Normanby is visibly changed upon some disappointment. My Lord Godolphin disagreeing from him in the late debate, my Lord Normanby reflected on him as if he did it for * * *† ends. My Lord

† A word wanting, probably private.

Godolphin only answered with a Spanish proverb, "that those who live in glass-houses, should not be the first to throw stones." The inclosed is from the Chancellor of Ireland.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Feb. 10, 1698-9.

The House of Commons took the report yesterday of the Prohibition Bill for the East India goods, as also of the bill for incorporating the Old Company, both which are ordered to be engrossed. They refused to receive a saving clause for the New Company, that nothing in this Act should derogate from what was granted to them by the former Act; they carried the question for not bringing up the clause to the table, by 165 against 140. So that the New Company is in danger of losing their five per cent. upon the Old Company's goods, if Westminster Hall does not relieve them.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Feb. 14, 1698-9.

I have little to trouble your Grace with, besides the inclosed account of our parliamentary affairs, which shews only where the ascendant lies in the house, and they make their use of it accordingly. The public has no place in our thoughts, but we

are pushing at each other as fast as we can. I think all the hope is, these gentlemen will run themselves out of breath, or convince the world of their ill-management, who think of nothing but pursuing their own animosities on one side, and their partialities on the other. I suppose we shall soon see them shewing the latter, in the case of Sir Joseph Herne, who is one of the trustees for circulating Exchequer Bills; and for what reason this employment was not to be put into Sir Harry * * * † question.

I perceive they do not intend to forget the Admiralty; Mr. Harley moved to-day for a paper they still wanted, which is the Victualler's exception to my Lord Orford's account. I suppose that is the next point they will go upon, and hope to prove it harder than they did those against Aylmer. I have spoken to the Archbishop, who desired me to shew him your Grace's letter, though at the same time he told me, that the Bishop of Worcester was on the same hand.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 5, 1698-9.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 2nd inst., and have sent the inclosed to Sir John Stanley.

† Some words wanting, which leave the sense sadly imperfect.

I see no reason for any body to trouble himself about Brown; he seems to be an abandoned creature, as he deserves, and it is best leaving him in the circumstances he has brought himself to. Mr. Price, a Welsh lawyer, and a member of the House of Commons, spoke to me concerning him yesterday. I know not who introduced him there, but Brown has both writ and spoke to him. I told him some particulars that I think have satisfied him. I let him know how this fellow first introduced himself, how he had been supplied, and what sums had been given, on condition that he should be gone, as he promised he would, and be no more troublesome to my Lord Peterborough, or any body else; that he never kept his word with me in any point, and when he found I would be his dupe no longer, he ingratiated himself again with Lord Peterborough by the means of Dr. Chamberlain; and as long as he could have any support there, he used me with all the insolence and impertinence imaginable, till of late they have shaken him off; and now he tries all ways to fix himself on me again, but I thought it neither just nor prudent to have more to do with him. Mr. Price told me that is the resolution he should take; he talked of him like a man half distracted. I am not sorry that he has applied himself to a man of understanding, that can give some account of him, if any body should be so weak as to give him a hearing.

I know not whether I am rightly informed as to Mr. Harley's irreconcileableness to the ministry.

Some think he would not meddle with any employment whatsoever, or if he would, he would not put himself under my Lord Chancellor, or Mr. Montague, who are still called the ministers, though there are none that I see who take upon them any management.* I hope they will recover again out of their consternation; and the other gentlemen do not appear so united as to make a fixed party.

We have been to-day upon the bill sent from the Lords, about appointing commissioners to treat of a Union with Scotland, and have not vouchsafed it a second reading. I doubt whether it be prudently done; they cavilled at the manner of its coming to us, without any recommendation from the throne to both houses, but only by an answer to an address from the Lords. As to the thing itself, they concluded it would be impracticable, and therefore the two kingdoms should not be amused with it.† Some talked of a want of authority in Scotland to do any thing of this kind, they having no more than a convention that has lasted these ten years, instead of free parliament. Mr. How said it looked like an artifice to bring thirty or forty Scotchmen into the house to supply the places of so many revenue officers that were to be dismissed. We had no division upon the question, the majority appearing to be above two to one.

* Probably this was the most extraordinary epoch in the history of party.

† Thus are great questions treated!

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 18, 1698-9.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 15th. If your Grace be half a year in arrear for what is due for secret service, I think your Grace should write to Mr. Montagûe about it, and when that is done, I will put him in mind of it, that the Privy Seal may be renewed, if it be necessary, and the money paid.

We have had a very particular business in the house to-day. The King having sent a message to try whether the Dutch guards would be allowed to remain here; nobody that heard of it could imagine that it would have any effect. However, his Majesty would have it attempted, but for what reasons I cannot tell. Mr. Harley, who was one that opposed appointing any day to take it into consideration, said that the delivery of such a message gave him much trouble of thought, more than he could express. He added, satirically, that he acquitted the ministers from having any hand in it; at least, those of them who were members; for if they had desired the continuance of the Dutch here, they could have proposed it when they had so many opportunities of doing it regularly, and with greater prospect of success, while the Disbanding Bill was depending in the House. Most who argued against taking the message into consideration, did it on the topic of the impracticableness; since it must be by repeal of

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an act so lately passed. But Mr. How was for giving plainer reasons, that if it could be done, they ought not to do it, since it would be giving an undue preference to strangers, and bring suspicion upon the natural born subjects, as if they were not to be trusted with the guard of the King's person, which made the first alienation of King James's army, when they discovered his inclination to foreigners.

Harry Ireton vindicated the ministers in such a manner, that he had better have let it alone, saying there never was so good a ministry since the first year of Henry the Seventh, not excepting any reigns of kings or queens.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 28, 1699.

I believe the King will go into Holland this summer, though he makes no mention of it yet, and I believe will not till the Parliament is up; but I am sure he will be very well pleased to see your Grace. I may be too forward in giving an opinion whether it would be best at Newmarket or at Windsor, and therefore I would rather refer it to the King. I hope to acquaint you with his mind by next post.

I know not whether you will think the Admiralty had any great escape yesterday, who carried only by four in so great a number, that they should not be

voted out. I think some of them should have little pleasure to stay in when they find so many against them, that are like to be uneasy to them at another time. Some joined with us to-day from whom it was hardly to be expected, as Mr. Foley and young Winnington. Mr. Harley withdrew before the question; but Sir Charles Shuckburgh never fails his party.

* * * * * *†

I hear Tom Foley has been with the King, to desire the Bishop of Bristol might be translated to Worcester; and the King's answer was, that he should consider it, as much as he and his friends considered any business that related to him.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 6, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 3rd, and see no occasion for your attending the King at Newmarket, unless you have a mind to concern yourself in the disposal of employments that will now come under consideration. If you would give your advice in it (I mean to your friends), and if it were followed, I believe they would find better effects of moderation and impartiality than they have done from some other methods. There is no doubt your Grace will be pressed to come into some share of

† A part wanting.

the administration, and if you would accept of it, it would give universal satisfaction. Ireland has been spoke of, as believing you would have the least exception to it. The Chamberlain's office does certainly require more attendance and town residence than may be fit at present for your uncertain state of health. I am sure no man wishes to see your Grace more in business than I do, both on public and private accounts. But as you have lately quitted one post, I cannot so soon expect you to engage in another; and therefore if you are concerned to stop other people's surmising it, you may as well see the King at Windsor, which would be easier to you, and, as I told you, it would be the same thing to the King.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 8, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 5th. Seeing your Grace is resolved upon your journey to Newmarket, you will best understand there in what posture our affairs are, and who are the persons designed to fill up the vacancies, which I have no knowledge of. I believe your Grace's advice will be of very great use to prevent some mistakes that perhaps may be otherwise made. I cannot presume to offer my opinion to my Lord Orford, but I think it very much concerns his reputation and future

quiet to make a right disposal of the Treasurership of the Navy, and to take care that the Commissioners of the Admiralty be well chosen. As to the latter, I hear he would be glad to be quit of Sir George Rooke, and perhaps Sir George would be willing to leave that board, if he is like to be on no better terms with my Lord Orford than he has been; but I think it will be wrong either way. I have no reason to have any partialities to Sir George Rooke, whom I am, in a manner, a perfect stranger to; and I have seen so much of the world, as to prefer justice and equity before any other respects whatsoever. But if my Lord Orford should either shew an implacableness towards Sir George Rooke, or even a suspicion in him that he is of an irreconcilable humour, I don't see but it must be a great lessening of his lordship's reputation, and leave a ferment for another year. Besides, Sir George's behaviour has been such while the prosecution of the Admiralty was depending, that many of my lord's friends were very well satisfied with it; and his enemies would have liked him better if he had been otherwise, which deserves some sort of consideration; and the neglect of it will give no very advantageous idea of my lord's temper.

I have nobody to propose or recommend for these vacancies; but, as a well-wisher to the public, I think it is a conjuncture wherein much good or much hurt may be done, according to the choice that shall be made of persons, proper or improper, to fill those

employments. I only wish your Grace may be consulted and your maxims followed, that every thing may be disposed of to the most deserving.

I meet with a report as if my Lord Portland were out of humour again, and was going off. I don't understand the bottom of it, but I suppose it is a spice of the old jealousy against my Lord Albermarle's increasing favour. I hear my Lord Portland goes to Windsor instead of Newmarket, and talks of preparing for a further retreat. If your Grace comes to Newmarket you will hear more of it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 18, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 17th; I only wish that his Majesty might enter into a free discourse with your Grace upon the controversy between the Duke of Ormond and Earl of Albermarle (relative to the military command) and then I do not doubt but he would understand the ill consequences of it, and nobody else could so well suggest an expedient that he would accept of * * *†.

I hope your Grace will have the same success in promoting moderation, which ought not to be rejected, if the necessity for it were rightly understood. The right disposing of the commission of Admiralty, may be a good instance of it; and if my

† Part wanting.

Lord Orford does not satisfy you in that particular, I hope he will refer himself to what your Grace and my Lord Chancellor shall resolve on at your meeting at Windsor.

I rejoice that your Grace took this opportunity of waiting on the King. I am afraid his Majesty took this opposition so ill from the Duke of Ormond, that nothing but your softness, and the good opinion he had of your judgment, could have induced him to lay aside an unseasonable resentment.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 20, 1699.

I have now got the names of those they say had the majority of votes by the ballot,* viz.—

Earl of Drogheda,
Francis Annesley,
John Trenchard,
Sir Francis Brewster.
James Hamilton, of Tullimore,
Sir Richard Leving,
Hervey Langford.

I suppose they are all sure men, that will expose the grant the most they can. When I told the King last night of the commission, he did not like it at all; but these things admit of no remedy, and perhaps at last may have no great effect. The forfeitures will not appear so large as is imagined, and if the King has a third to dispose of, it may reach to as many as he cares to gratify.

* In regard to the commission of inquiry into the Irish grants, I suppose.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 25, 1699.

My Lord Portland came to Kensington on Sunday last in the afternoon,* which was unexpected to most people. He was with the King in his closet after the cabinet council was up, and has lain at London these two nights. He has been very pressing to deliver up his key, but I think he is consenting to keep it for some time longer at least. He has been with the King this morning, and is gone this evening to Windsor. I told him he was coming into a condition where he ought most to be envied, and yet would avoid it. That was to enjoy what the ancients so much extolled, *cum dignitate otium*. He may be as well with the King as any moderate man can wish, and have as much share of business as he will care for.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 27, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 25th. As to the King's being at Windsor; if the Parliament rises (as I expect) on Wednesday next, his Majesty will go towards the latter end of next week to Windsor, and he bid me tell your Grace he

* Portland, finding that the favour of Albermarle with the King was triumphant, resolved to resign all his offices, and though pressed to retain them, persevered in his determination.

would not have you defer coming thither; and therefore he believes you will not go to your own house till he has seen you * * * * * *

I imagine your Grace will have a pretty difficult task at Windsor. I hope the King will not expect too much; and the next thing to be wished is that some gentlemen do not refuse every thing. Our managers have of late left the business of the house to go on as it will: whether it is their * * * † being layed aside they leave to others to act better if they can, and will have no hand themselves in the short provisions that are making; or whether they are out of humour as suspecting the King is inclined to new measures, and is not enough displeased with the party that have so barefacedly opposed him all this session I believe the King is sufficiently dissatisfied with some of those gentlemen, however, and would be glad their number should be lessened. A majority in opposition is a great weight, and those are happy advisers that can find out the proper methods for lessening it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 29, 1699.

I made my Lord Orford a short visit yesterday. I thought him pretty easy, but I understand from Sir James Forbes that he is very much out of

† Some words wanting.

humour. He thinks he is for laying down. I take the meaning of it to be, that if all the Admiralty places be not disposed of as he would have them, he will have nothing to do there. I wish the rest do not harden themselves in these resolutions, and keep open breaches till ruin flows in upon us.

MR VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 2, 1699.

I had an answer yesterday from my Lord Portland, who tells me he would write into Holland about the business, without saying a word about himself. I imagine, therefore, he will go on at this rate till some new accident makes it better or worse.

May 6.

Monsieur D'Allonne told me yesterday that he was newly arrived from Windsor, and had brought up my Lord Portland's key. His Majesty having yielded to his importunities, had given him leave to resign it, which he says my Lord received with great joy, and large professions of zeal and fidelity; and the same readiness to serve his Majesty in what he shall command him. So I presume he will keep the lodge and the superintending of the gardens.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 4, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 2nd. We have now ended our session, and his Majesty intends to be at Windsor on Saturday next, when he would be glad to see you the same day. I hope, therefore, it is not too long a journey for you to take. My Lord Chancellor intends likewise to be there that night or the next morning, and I suppose Mr. Montague will do the like. God grant you may please both sides; or that you may direct them in the right way, though it pleases neither. I imagine beforehand, where the greatest stiffness will be, and it will not be amiss if all the reason be on that side too. I think the King will be moderate, and I am persuaded my Lord Albermarle will join with you in what you think most advisable. He took an occasion to speak to me to-day of your Grace, and made great professions of his esteem for you. He has the opinion he ought to have of your integrity and judgment; and therefore, I believe he will in a great measure be guided by it.

I should think the grand affair would be to keep my Lord Orford in temper. Those who have persuaded him to quit the Treasurership and stick to the Admiralty* have consulted his honour more than

* Edward Russell, Lord Orford, united in his own person two offices which ought never to be held by one man—First Lord of the Admiralty and Treasurer of the Navy. He seems to have been the most grasping, avaricious, and intractable of the ministers.

his inclinations, which perhaps would still draw him aside. None are like to be so difficult in their terms as those who think they may have an advantage by being refused.

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I have not been in the way to hear the descants upon the King's speech, but I imagine they will think it an intimation that they are to meet no more.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 15, 1699.

I had an opportunity yesterday, before his Majesty went to the cabinet council, to lay before him the letter I received from your Grace that afternoon. The first thing he said to me after he had read it was, that I should let you know that my Lord Orford* came to him in the morning, and resigned his employment in the Admiralty. I understood it was in this manner. He told the King he had heard that choice was made of a set of men to be Commissioners of the Admiralty, which he was very well satisfied with, and the rather since he might now retire, as being no longer useful. The King answered

* The day of Orford's resignation of office has generally been wrongly stated as the 15th, whereas this letter proves that it was on the 14th. He had been vehemently attacked in parliament, as we have already seen; but it is evident that the cause of his going out was that Sir George Rooke had a seat at the Admiralty, notwithstanding his efforts to exclude him.

that he did not expect so sudden a change in him after he had resolved to continue in the Admiralty; that his Majesty was come to no resolution as to the commissioners, only he had spoken with Sir G. Rooke, to be satisfied whether he had been in the cabals against him, and found that his lordship had been misinformed as to some facts. Sir George professed a great esteem for him, and that he had not failed to express it on proper occasions; that he had indeed been silent in some debates of the House of Commons about Admiralty matters, when such points were started as he could not justify; but where his lordship was particularly concerned he did him the best service he could. My Lord Orford replied that he had nothing to object against Sir. G. Rooke, but wished well to his Majesty's affairs, in whose soever hands he should put them, and so took his leave.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 16, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of this day, and am perfectly convinced that your Grace judges right what modesty will end in; and you are extremely kind in the warning you give me; but it is bestowed upon one who can make no use of it. I should think myself the most impudent fellow in the world, if I asked any thing after having received more than ever I expected, or pretend to deserve;

besides, I can't bear the clamour that pursues those that get any grants. If I had a less sense of reputation, yet I find it so necessary for the support of one who has but few friends, that it will be my utmost caution * to do any thing that may bring it into question, which I find begging does in this envious ill-natured age. I have heard some say in the House of Commons, when they were charged with receiving grants, that they came to them without their seeking; and it has often been said, both by the King and my Lord Portland, that whatever was bestowed upon the latter, was given before it was asked. By this, one would think the modest run no such danger in this reign, if your Grace had not been so evident an instance of the contrary, where * * *† was overlooked to a greater degree than it can be done again.

I was with the King yesterday morning, when there was occasion to speak of the offices; but neither of us mentioned any additional allowance. I put him in mind of what my Lord Portland first mentioned to me when it began to be talked of that my Lord Jersey was to be Secretary, and that was the settling at this time of an agreement between the two offices, that for the future they should be accountable to one another for the fees they received, and divide them equally. As soon as I heard of it, I thought it much the best way, that it would not only keep a fair correspondence between the secretaries,

* So written. † A word wanting.

and those under them, but likewise preserve the offices from a great many * * *† which they may be liable to run into from the drawing in of customers. My Lord Portland bidding me speak of it to the King, I found him prepared for it, and said it was the advice of your Grace and my Lord Lonsdale, that such an adjustment should take place as soon as it was possible, and this seemed the most proper opportunity for it. The King told me he had already spoke to my Lord Jersey about it, and therefore bid me discourse it with him, which I did the same afternoon, without mentioning my Lord Portland as the author of it. He seemed to receive it as a matter he acquiesced in, which is enough for me, that have not experienced the conveniences or inconveniences of it.

We had a short compliment about the offices, and then I asked him whether he had any occasion for keeping Mr. Rowley? To that he answered, he could not part with him, he and Mr. Yard having been recommended by your Grace. I suppose, therefore, he will be as he was; or otherwise, he may take his choice when I have any thing better to offer him. I believe your Grace need not be uneasy as to Harry Mordaunt, for I hope the King will not depart from what he promised; though one must needs say it will be thought an odd choice to put Mr. Mordaunt into such an employment, when, if he had some other sort of place, though to double

† A word wanting.

the value, it would be very well liked. I have been inquiring into the value of this office, which they say is but 500*l.* per annum. The deputy, who officiates, I hear very much commended, who, I suppose, will be continued, and that Mr. Mordaunt will take it as a sinecure.

Your Grace will have understood, from the company you saw to-day, whether my Lord Orford's quitting was at that time so great a secret as is pretended,* my Lord Chancellor and Mr. Montague both disowning to have been made privy to it, though the latter went with him that morning to Kensington.

I waited on my Lord Chancellor this morning, to thank him for his kindness to Mr. Stanyon, his Lordship having writ to me that I should name him to the King to succeed Mr. Bridgeman in the Council Office. I spoke to him, at the same time, about Brown, who plagues him with letters; but, as to other matters, nothing was said on either side. I did not think your Grace would have the curiosity to see such a place as I was recommended to. I confess the sight of the house was disheartening to me. Being scarce able to raise the purchase, I could never bear the thoughts of building.

* It will be seen, by a former letter of Vernon's, that Orford's determination to resign, if he had not every thing his own way, was known long before.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 17, 1699.

I write this before I go to Kensington, because I think I shall not have more to say afterwards. I take it for granted the removes will be made of the President and Privy Seal: I had orders yesterday to tell my Lord Pembroke that he should bring the Privy Seal with him to Council, and to speak to my Lord Lonsdale to be ready to receive it, which they will do accordingly.

The Duke of Leeds* was, yesterday morning, with the King. What passed I know not; but, it is said, he gives no consent to make it a resignation.

I spoke to the King about Mr. Mordaunt, who will make his promise good. He spoke to Mr. Montague, to know whether there would not be less notice taken, if he were made a Commissioner of the Customs, or to propose something of that value; but he not being ready to do it, I conclude Mr. Mordaunt will be Treasurer of the Ordonnance, and I won't cease soliciting till it is done.

The King spoke yesterday of the allowance at the Green Cloth, but in a way that I least of all expected, which was that my Lord Jersey should have my * * *,† and I should have his 700*l.* per annum. I begged he would not think of that; for the giving

* President, dismissed from office about this time, and his post of President given to Lord Pembroke.

† A word wanting.

my Lord a post, and lessening the dues belonging to it, would be to chagrine or affront him, which I would never contribute to. My Lord Jersey spoke to me of it afterwards, and told me he had so settled it with your Grace, when you met at Lamb's house. I told him it was so unreasonable a proposal, that I could not believe your Grace ever had it in your thoughts; and he seemed to say it must be so. I said I would be judged by your Grace, whether I ought to be advantaged by any thing that was taken from him; but I was so sure you would disprove of it, that I would not have it put upon me. I am satisfied you must have been misunderstood; perhaps you thought the King would make the places equal as to profit; but to make the inequality on the wrong side can't be the way for me to my Lord Jersey's good will and friendship, who would perhaps be as sensible in this point as any other whatsoever, and may think his perquisites enough diminished by dividing the fees. Mr. Montague called at the office yesterday, when I was not there, and I went to see him this morning. He told me he had seen Sir Thomas Littleton,* and that he found him very indifferent whether he removed from the Treasury, since Mr. Montague and Mr. Smith stayed there; and upon that he opened the convenience there would be in making my Lord Hartington Treasurer of the Navy, and would have me concern myself in it. I have seen Sir Thomas

* Now Speaker.

Littleton since, who is not near so indifferent as was represented.

I have just now a letter from Sir Cloudesley Shovell, who begs he may not be removed to the Admiralty, being much better pleased to keep at the Navy Board.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May (*no date*), 1699.

I received the honour of your Grace's letter of the 13th at Kensington, where the Council sat late, the Lord President being exact in going through the whole paper. My Lord Lonsdale received the seals. Mr. Southwell was sworn clerk of the Council in ordinary, and Stanyon in extraordinary. My Lord Chancellor was with the King in his closet after Council. I think he declined proposing Commissioners for the Admiralty, but undertook to know my Lord Tankerville's mind, whether he would accept of being First Commissioner. What the result of it will be I know not; but Ben Overton heard my Lord Tankerville say he would be drawn through a horse-pond before he would take that employment; and he spoke himself to my Lord Marlborough, to get him excused of it, if it were mentioned.

It is thought my Lord Chancellor is more out of humour than he would let appear. If it be so, I

am very sorry for it. I don't know what are the particular reasons.

I believe Sir Thomas Littleton will be Treasurer of the Navy, though Mr. Montague still wished it might be my Lord Hartington. I doubt whether Mr. Hill will be admitted into the Treasury, having heard that the King is apprehensive Mr. Montague and he will not agree. All I can say to it is, that a very useful and able man will be rejected.

The King told me yesterday that he would make his promise good to Mr. Mordaunt. It can't be long delayed, the King talking of going to Holland within a fortnight. I suppose my Lord Devonshire* has been with him; but what has passed I know not. Sir George Rooke was waiting to speak with the King. I know not what is resolved about his quitting or staying; his desires are to be employed at sea; but that, I think, should be least of all consented to. Generally, people speak very favourably of Mitchell, and wish he were at the Admiralty Board. The King does not think of excusing Sir Cloudesley Shovell.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 20, 1699.

Sir James Forbes tells me, it is taken notice of that I am the only person of my Lord Orford's

* Lord Keeper.

acquaintance, who has not been to visit him since his laying down. I answered that I had forborne it, because I thought my paying any respect of that kind was neither expected nor agreeable there, since I had often waited on my Lord Orford, and particularly when he came last from Chippenham; but I had not heard he ever thought fit to take any notice of it, either in returning the visit, or by excusing it. I could not, therefore, judge otherwise, but he would like better my staying away. Sir James told me my Lord Orford had some jealousy of me (which he was since satisfied in), that I had carried a message from Sir George Rooke to the King about his laying down, when he could not prevail to get an audience himself; but he was lately informed I had no hand in it, but it was done by somebody else. I am sure I know so little of it, that I don't yet understand what is meant by it; but if people are ready to credit all groundless stories, and to act upon them as if they were realities, I think it impossible to preserve oneself in the good opinion of such a temper, and therefore it is to no purpose to go about it. However, I told Sir James that I should still be as ready to wait on my Lord Orford as if he were in business, and I believe I shall do it; but I wish that those who do not care to bear slights would be a little more cautious of putting them upon others.

I could likewise find, by Sir James, that my Lord Orford is like to be impetuous, and will not have it

thought that his resigning was so much his own act, as it was the King's to put a force upon him by refusing every thing he proposed; and therefore Rooke was supported, and my Lord Hartington rejected. Your Grace will judge better than I can what ill consequences are like to ensue upon such violent resentments.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 23, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 20th. I knew I could not be mistaken in what your Grace intended about the increase of my allowance, though his Majesty might be willing to understand it in such a sense as might keep off a new charge from the civil list, which I know his Majesty is cautious in; and therefore I concluded from the beginning, it was best for me to rest contented with what I have.

My Lord Jersey told me this morning, he had heard from your Grace, but it was not yet in answer to what he had writ to you. I assured him that it would not alter the case.

I was yesterday to make my visit to my Lord Orford, which was done with freedom; we had no discourse but upon indifferent things. He intends to dine with me to-morrow, my wife having engaged his sister Harbord, and some more of his relations.

For aught I know, this may create a jealousy another way; but I satisfy myself in good intentions, and have no other cautions to observe.

My Lord Tankerville has excused himself from serving in the Admiralty; he was with the King on Sunday last, and they parted with great civility on both sides. My Lord Bridgewater was sent for yesterday, and though he had really no mind to the employment, yet he submitted himself to the King's pleasure, and has accepted it. My Lord Haversham has been since spoken to, and he comes into the commission with little entreaty. Sir George Rooke and Sir Robert Rich stay in; the latter, I hear, thinks he has not been very well used by my Lord Orford, who refused to make his son a captain of a fifth-rate frigate. I don't find there will be above one seaman more in the commission, that is either Shovell or Mitchell. Kendall and Wharton, I hear, have resigned, and some are of opinion their places should not be filled up, but that five will be enough for the commission.

I do not know what is to be done at the Treasury; I believe Mr. Hill will not be there, since it is thought he will not be agreeable to Mr. Montague. I don't think he will care to be in the Custom House, and therefore it is better he stayed abroad.

The King has ordered me to write to the Admiralty, that his convoy and yacht may be got ready by the middle of next week, he holding his resolution to go on Friday se'nnight. I wish he may leave

people satisfied and in good humour, but there is no great appearance of it at present.

My Lord Abingdon died yesterday, of a fever. I saw my Lord Bridgewater this evening, who tells me how earnest he was with the King to be excused, but he was pressed beyond resistance; and the King would not part with him till he had kissed his hand upon the acceptance.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 25, 1699.

I had the honour of my Lord Orford's company yesterday, so that I hope I am not the obnoxious person I was thought. He had not heard till then of my Lord Bridgewater's being in the Admiralty, and seemed well satisfied with it.

I believe, now the King has thought further of it, he wishes he had rather placed my Lord Haversham at the Council of Trade, but I doubt whether he can now alter it so well.

I suppose my Lord Jersey got the warrant signed to-day, for renewing the commission; there are to be five only in it, viz.—Lord Bridgewater, Lord Haversham, Sir Robert Rich, Sir George Rooke, and Sir David Mitchell, who, I believe, will do very well there.

There is still a likelihood of my Lord Tankerville's being second Commissioner of the Treasury.

I suppose Mr. Montague has undertaken to speak to him about it. Sir William Blackett has writ to excuse himself from coming into that commission, but he does it in the terms of disabling himself, and therefore may be pressed further.

My Lord Ferrers will be sworn a Privy Counsellor this evening, and I believe he is intended to succeed my Lord Bridgewater at the Council of Trade.

The King has had an eclaircissement with my Lord Steward, and that matter seems to be pretty well over. The Duke asked the King leave to go into France this summer, and for that reason would have been excused from being in the Commission of Lords Justices; but the King did not approve of it, therefore I suppose he will desist.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 27, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 24th, and humbly acknowledge the favour of your advice, which nobody shall be more punctual in observing. I hope I stand as well as I can expect with my Lord Orford, and it shall not be my fault if it be not kept upon that foot.

It has been a good fortune to me that I have had nothing to do with the warrant for removing the Commission of Admiralty; the King signed two,

one placing my Lord Haversham next to my Lord Bridgewater, the other put him after Sir Robert Rich and Sir George Rooke. Before they were delivered out he was spoke to, I believe, by my Lord Portland, and appeared very well satisfied to be in the lower place, whereupon the warrant was delivered out accordingly, but then he changed his mind, and thought it an injury to the peerage. The King was willing to alter it again; but that Sir Robert Rich opposes, as being contrary to the precedents. I don't know how this be ended, but if the new commission goes on as it has begun, and my Lord Haversham and Sir Robert Rich fall to squabbling, they will only make a farce, whereas it was possible to have constituted such a commission as would not have been liable to exceptions. My Lord Tankerville has been with the King this morning, and accepted of being second Commissioner of the Treasury. He did it with so good a grace, that the King is very well satisfied in the giving it to him.

Mr. Mordaunt attending to-day, I acquainted his Majesty with it, and as soon as he came into the bed-chamber, he kissed the King's hand for Mr. Bertie's place. The Treasury are to prepare the warrant for it. I believe as soon as Sir Thomas Littleton waits on the King, which may be on Monday, the Treasurership of the Navy will be given him. The new regulation for that office was approved at council on Thursday last. Whether

it be Mr. Pelham or Sir Steven Fox that is to make the second vacancy in the Treasury, I know not.

I take for granted there will be no room there for Mr. Hill at present. He had desired to carry the King's compliment to Turin upon the birth of the young prince. That my Lord Jersey tells me is ordered; and besides he may have the offer of coming into the Commission of Trade as a nearer step to the Treasury.

The King dines to-day at Hampton Court; it is said my Lord Chancellor is to be of the party. I wish it may be so; that will be the best mark I have yet seen of his being in good humour.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 30, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 27th with the inclosed from Brown, who is a strange fellow to show any kindness to; he writ this letter but two or three days after I had been prevailed with, to send him £30 to get him out of the bailiff's hands. I made, indeed, conditions at the same time that he should never trouble my Lord Chancellor or Lord President, who I found were made uneasy with his impertinences. I wish he would write from beyond sea, as he tells your Grace; but there is not one word he says to be depended on.

Sir Thomas Littleton kissed the King's hand yes-

terday, for the Treasurership of the Navy, so that and Mr. Mordaunt's warrants will be forthwith dispatched. The contest was kept up till yesterday between my Lord Haversham and Sir Robert Rich about precedency; but last night Sir Robert waited on the King and gave it up with a compliment, but the precedents were as much against him as for him.

The King has sent for my Lord Dorset to satisfy him of the reasons why he is not continued in the Commission of Justices. My Lord Steward laid aside the thoughts of going into France, since the King does not approve of it; but I question whether he may be in very good humour, since on Sunday last he delivered to the King a petition of Captain Desborough, the person who gave the Admiralty all the vexation in the House of Lords.

The Parliament of Ireland is ordered to be dissolved. My Lord Chancellor is to know of the Duke of Bolton what his intentions are as to his returning into Ireland. In some discourses I have had with him, I found him shy of explaining himself, but he seemed to hint as if he aimed at the lieutenancy. However, at the last he seemed not to take it amiss, that I told him my thoughts of the conveniency even to himself at present, that the Commission of Justices should subsist, and he be continued in it.

They say my Lord Stamford is to be in the Commission of Trade, and Mr. Hill is designed to supply the second vacancy. If that be so, my Lord

Ferrers will be unprovided for. Mr. Smith had a good mind to oppose my Lord Tankerville's taking place of him, but I think that is quieted again.

What I mentioned of my Lord Stamford, I have since heard is contradicted. My Lord Lexington, seeing no likelihood of his going into Ireland, will be glad to be in the Commission of Trade.

If the Duke of Bolton stay in the Commission of Ireland, I don't know but the Earl of Berkeley may be the third. I suppose Sir Rowland Gwyn will be provided for in the Custom House. Mr. Pelham has forbore coming to the Treasury of late, but Sir Stephen Fox still sticks on.

The King's journey holds for Friday. To-morrow the council meets, as well for proroguing the parliament as for naming the Lords Justices.

To-morrow morning my Lord Chancellor, and some other Lords of the Council, are to meet the President, Advocate and Secretaries of Scotland, to confer concerning their settlement in America,* which we think contrary to the treaty with Spain.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 31, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 29th. I wish I could tell you that my Lord Chancellor is entirely in humour. I am afraid he is

* At. Darien.

more uneasy at losing my Lord Orford, than his Lordship is at quitting the Admiralty; but I hope he will recover out of it.

The King talks of going away this evening, to avoid travelling, both in heat and dust. The Lords Justices were declared yesterday at council. Your Grace knows who are the three new ones, viz., my Lord Privy Seal,* Lord Bridgewater, and Lord Jersey. They are in the place of Lord Dorset, Lord Romney, and Lord Orford.

Mr. Smith kissed the King's hand last night for the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. The Treasury Commission is passing: my Lord Tankerville and Mr. Boyle are the new ones, and Sir Stephen Fox continues in. The parliament is this day prorogued to the 13th of July.

The new commission for Ireland is settled. The Duke of Bolton is contented to stay in, and the Earl of Berkeley is the third commissioner. The Duke is made Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire and Dorsetshire, and Warden of New Forest. This was procured for him by my Lord Chancellor last night. The Commission of Trade is not yet fully resolved on. They say my Lord Stamford would be willing to be at the head of it, but he has not been asked; and if he had it, it would hardly keep him in temper, his expectations having been higher. I think he is one of those tempers that nobody cares either to offend or gratify. The King is inclined

* Lord Lonsdale.

to put my Lord Lexington into that commission, and Mr. Hill to be the other, who stands likewise fair for the Treasury at the next remove.

Mr. Hetherington will have the vacant judge's place in Ireland, upon my Lord Chancellor's recommendation. My Lord Herbert has solicited hard, either for Ireland or the Commission of Trade. I am afraid you will see him peevish in Worcestershire, and will less care what becomes of Bewdley.

I believe the King will give the Duke of Leeds's lieutenancy to my Lord Burlington; but I don't know who he designs for Hull.

My Lord Sunderland sends me the inclosed for your Grace.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 3, 1699.

His Majesty went from Kensington about eleven on Thursday night; but at what time he got to Margate, or where he embarked, I have not yet heard; my Lord Jersey, who went the journey, thinking it sufficient if he brings up the news himself. We suppose the King set sail yesterday, in the evening; if so, he may now be landed in Holland.

My Lord Berkeley, though a melancholy mourner for his son, kissed the King's hand on Thursday, for his being in the Irish Commission. He says he

must take a turn into Gloucestershire before he can go to Ireland.

One of the last declarations the King made, was for filling up the Commission of Trade, with my Lords Stamford and Lexington: so Mr. Hill is left out of every thing. I don't know that he will be so much concerned as the public ought to be. The King had promised Lord Lexington to make him of the Council of Trade, since he could not send him to Ireland; and he not being thought a very good chief, my Lord Stamford was taken, he having asked it at last by my Lord Chancellor, and he was unwilling to refuse one of that humour, who began to show himself very dogged for his being neglected.

The King, at his going away, bid me tell Sir Francis Blake, he had nothing in reserve to dispose of but a Commission of Victuallers. He does not seem inclinable to accept of it, but takes time to consider.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 6, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 3rd. I think the noise of witches breaks out like a plague in several places at distant times. If these miserable creatures are in haste to die by other people's hands, and will confess they know not what,

they will be served as they are in Scotland, where the judges tell them they don't believe them, and yet sentence them to be burnt.

We have an account this morning, by the Brill packet boat, that the King landed at the usual place, the Orance Polder, on Saturday, about five in the afternoon. I suppose, therefore, the Lords Justices will meet within a day or two, and open their commission.

I believe the Duke of Bolton does not think of going into Ireland till towards next spring. He intends his duchess shall come over and meet him in Yorkshire in August. I think he is in good humour, and willing to do right, both to my Lord Galway and Mr. Methuen; the last in great perplexity about an order he has been served with from our House of Lords, directing him to put the Society of London into possession of those lands which the House of Lords in Ireland took from them in behalf of the Bishop of Derry.

I am afraid my Lord Berkeley will not be going into Ireland this month, which is inconvenient, since the new commission ought to be opened, and the Archbishop dismissed.

The lieutenancy of Dorsetshire has been vacant ever since the Earl of Bristol's death. Major-General Erle proposed the Duke of Bolton to my Lord Chancellor, those in the county not having been able to agree about a lord-lieutenant.

My Lord Jersey brought directions from Margate

to speak to my lord Chancellor about a Lord-lieutenant for Yorkshire, in the Duke of Leeds's place.

My Lord Cornwallis is married to-day to my Lady Arnes's daughter.

Conway Seymour had a rencontre on Sunday last in St. James's Park with Captain Kirk, of my Lord Orford's regiment. I believe both were in drink; and, calling one another beaus at a distance, they challenged, and went out of the park to fight. Mr. Seymour received a wound in the neck; but I think there is no danger in it.

I just now hear the Lords Justices have appointed to meet to-morrow.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 8, 1699.

The Lords Justices met yesterday; they were all present but my Lord Steward and Lord President. The latter has been much out of order, but is recovering. I told the Bishop of Worcester that his diocese is infected with notions about witches; he intends his clergy shall rectify their mistakes in that particular. He told me some of the topics he would have argued. He don't much controvert the power of devils in the Gentile world, and their extraordinary operations may still take place among the Pagans. He is inclinable enough to believe

what some authors have writ of the strange effects in such places; but he thinks the Gospel, as far as it reaches, has destroyed the works of the devil, and those who are in the covenant of grace can receive no hurt from the infernal powers, either in their persons, children, or goods; that a man may be so profligate as to give himself to the devil, but he can have no assistance from him to hurt any body else in a supernatural way. I think we may assent to this latter part, and leave the devil and the Gentiles to argue the rest among themselves.

The Prince, Princess, and the Duke of Gloucester are gone to Windsor to-day, to stay there till winter.

Sir Thomas Littleton has not yet overcome his uneasiness about the passing the Treasurer's accounts of the Navy Office. He stops his patent till he can receive satisfaction. I believe the Treasury will so far gratify him as to consider whether there may not be more proper and expeditious methods introduced.

I have letters to-day from Sir William Beeston of the 21st March. He speaks of the Scotch at Darien*, that their provisions begin to fall short,

* The Scotch Parliament had passed an Act, some years before, for the establishment of a company trading to Africa and the Indies. A great deal of ability was shown by the projectors of the company, and a large capital was embarked in it. Letters patent were ordered by the Parliament under the Great Seal, but, it is said, without a warrant from the Crown. The jealousy of the English and Dutch, however, and the rights of the Spaniards, were opposed to this company, and the legal defects of its constitution were employed to ruin it somewhat remorselessly.

and their money likewise fails them. They sent goods to the value of 15,000*l.* to sell to the Spaniards, but the vessel was cast away near Carthagena, so that their goods were all seized, and the men put into prison. Sir William believes their wants will make them run to Jamaica, which he wishes, as thinking they will be an additional strength to the island. The Spanish jealousy involves the English in this attempt as much as the Scots. When Sir William sent a vessel to the Spanish governors, to undeceive them, they would not suffer a man to come ashore, nor return any answer. They having seized several of our trading ships, and carried them into Porto Bello, Rear-Admiral Benbow has sailed with his whole force to re-demand them from the Admiral of the Benevento* fleet. I know not what this may come to at last. Admiral Benbow was lately at Carthagena, where he found the Spaniards very much unconcerned whether the King recovered or not. Upon his death, they hoped to be under the power of one that would protect them, and openly avowed their inclination to France. These are generally their sentiments in the kingdom of Peru. But in Mexico it may happen otherwise: the Indians there are very earnest with the Countess of Montezuma, who is descended of their race, that she would take upon her the title of Queen, which she seems willing to accept; but the Conde, her husband, refuses it as

* So written.

yet, though it is thought, if the King of Spain dies, he will set up for himself.

The Scotch ministers, at the late conference, among other things, touched at the convenience their settlement might be to England in case of the King of Spain's death, and that the French should pretend to seize those countries. I did not think they were like to be invited thither; but if there is to be a scramble for the Indies, the footing the Scotch have taken between Mexico and Peru will, if they keep it, make them very considerable in those parts.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 10, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 7th, and shall never do any thing to forfeit the confidence your Grace has been pleased to repose in me. The ill consequences that attend the disposal of places to such as are not fit for them, are very obvious, and the greatest clamour arises from thence. The Bill of Offices, or the self-denying would never be thought necessary, if all commissions and places were filled with honest men, who understood the business, and then nobody would concern themselves whether they were members of parliament or not; whereas, things are now left to

chance, and if there be no choice among the solicitors, the boldest of them must carry it; and it is not to be wondered at if a nation be dissatisfied with such a management, and take what ways they can to get it redressed.

I am afraid ministers may find themselves under a mistake when they yield so much to importunities, and prefer people merely because they think them their friends or creatures. Such as are like to disparage them do not deserve that name; but by always recommending the most deserving, they will tie to themselves a new set of men, who will be of more use and credit to them. As we have ordered matters, and as industry has been overlooked and discouraged, it may be thought hard to find out the men who shall be adapted to the several stations. But if that method were once begun, and kept to, good men would come to be discovered; and by comparing and judging impartially, little or no mistake would be committed. These notions are, perhaps, for Utopia, and impracticable every where else.

We have not our letters yet from Holland.

If your Grace will entertain yourself with a pamphlet the Bishop of Worcester* is very angry at, as reflecting upon him, in particular, for changing his diocese so often, I send it enclosed. He has found out the printer, and sent him to me to-day, that I

* Dr. Lloyd, previously Bishop of Lichfield. He succeeded the famous Stillingfleet.

should examine him about the author. He pretends not to know him more than by guess, and desires a little time to find him out; and if he does not appear, he will return and submit himself to my censure or prosecution. I thought the proposal fair, and the man appearing to be sensible and responsible, I dismissed him on that condition. Whether the Bishop will be satisfied with it, I do not yet know; but I think it is the best not to be too pert or violent about the press, when it is very uncertain how far the law will bear me out.

I think Sir Thomas Littleton comes off from his uneasiness about the treasurership. He has discoursed his difficulties with Sergison and Lyddal, the leading commissioners, and the Navy Board, and they have assured him, he shall be made easy in the method of accompting, one way or another.

On Thursday last the Bishop of St. David's appeal was heard by a Court of Delegates, who were unanimous in their opinions, that there was no ground for an appeal, that the cause should be sent back to the Archbishop's Court, and he should be condemned in 60*l.* cost; so I suppose his deprivation draws near.

I have seen a letter from the Scotch colony at Darien, of the 8th of February. It mentions a skirmish they have had with a party of Spaniards, whom they drove back to their garrison, taking a captain prisoner. They had an ensign killed, and

fourteen men wounded. They sent two officers to Carthagena, to demand the prisoners that were taken there when their ship was cast away, which was bound to Barbadoes, but, by stress of weather, drove to the Spanish coast. They then foresaw a want of provisions if they were not speedily supplied; they reckoned they could not subsist above three months, which are some time since expired; so that if they have no more recruits, their condition is bad.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 15, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 12th, and shall not fail to speak to the Duke of Bolton, as I find it may be of any use; but he is of a pretty capricious humour, and may draw back the more he is spoke to directly, though it be for his own interest. I believe Mr. Bridges found it so; and Mr. Smith tells me he thought the Duke was not very well pleased with Mr. Bridges for making him the proposition. He believes, when the Duke has been in Hampshire, whither he goes next week, and shall have seen how many houses he has upon his hands, and have considered what it will cost him to finish it if he has a mind to live there, and of what convenience it will be to him to sell it for

the easing himself of his debt, he will then have other thoughts about it. In the meantime, I have spoke to Ben Overton, who, I think, knows more of the Duke's ways than the others do, and is more trusted by him; and he will draw from the Duke what his intentions are, and to dispose him, as far as he can, to part with Aberston, which he is fully convinced he ought to do without any deliberation. As to the King's buying it, there is no manner of likelihood of it. Seeing my Lord Portland yesterday, I asked him about it, who tells me, if the Duke would give him but a guinea, he would pay him a hundred if ever the King purchased there.

My Lord Portland told me of a purchase he had his eye long upon, but he was afraid he should go without it at last. It is my Lord Clarendon's estate at Cornbury. It is some time since, that, underhand, he got an old mortgage upon it for 7,000*l.* assigned to him in Mr. Eyles's name, who has been driving the bargain for him with one Tracy, a steward or agent to my Lord Clarendon, who came so far with him as to settle the price at about 30,000*l.* It being thus advanced, my Lord Portland thought fit to appear in it himself, and spoke to my Lord Rochester about having been first told by Tracey, that my Lord Rochester had declared to him, he had no thought of buying it himself; but my Lord Rochester showed no good liking to the proposal, and told my Lord Portland, he never

heard that his brother had any intentions of parting with it; and as to himself, Tracey had never spoke to him of it. My Lord Portland does not know what to make of this proceeding; he is inclined to believe that my Lord Rochester will rather get into that estate than any body else shall have it; but not having money enough to lay down for it, he will pay him down his mortgage, as he himself hitherto paid him the interest, though it did not appear before.

I had heard your Grace had once some thoughts of purchasing Cornbury, but I told my Lord Portland that I was confident you were now looking out for something else. However, he desired I would know of your Grace, whether you have still an inclination to it, or are in treaty about it.

He likewise heard that my Lord Ormond had been lately down to see it; but since his coming up, the Duke tells him he shall have nothing to do with it.

The letters that arrived this day from Ireland tell us that the new commissioners are like to execute their powers with a pretty high hand, and, perhaps, exceed the limits of their commission, and not only report the grants above their value, but likewise insert other matters, that may draw on reflections upon the King's ministers who have served him both in England and Ireland. They have desired the rooms belonging to the Parliament

House for their sessions, and they sit themselves in the House of Lords. My Lord Drogheda is wavering whether he should act with them or not.

A ——* fire broke out yesterday in the afternoon at Redriff, on Southwark side, which lasted twelve or fourteen hours, and has destroyed about two hundred houses, besides several ships in the river, the fire happening when the tide was going, so that the ships could not be removed.

Mr. Conway Seymour died this morning. His death will be charged upon Captain Kirk; but some say he would not have died of his wound, if he had been regular in his diet since he received it. They talk of a debauch he made on Sunday last, which threw him into a high fever.

I hear the report of Mr. Seymour's death is contradicted; but there is little hopes he can live. Eating of fruit, and drinking four or five glasses of Burgundy wine after, it set him a vomiting, and opened his wound, and threw him into a fever.

The printer of the pamphlet against the Bishop of Worcester is ordered to be prosecuted; the information against him will be grounded on the 12th and 13th pages, which he speaks of translations and removes as a scandal to the Church, and a reproach to the King; and that in Ireland, as in Jeroboam's time, the lowest of the people have been graced with the highest preferments in the

* A word illegible.

Church, as if it were done on purpose to expose her.

As to what your Grace has heard about the Duke of Bolton's being out of humour with you, I can't imagine there is any thing in it; but if it be so, I shall know it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 20, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 17th. I am sorry there should be no end of Brown's impertinence. He called upon me on Saturday, to know whether I had any thing to say to him from your Grace, in answer to his letters. I told him I had not, and he had no answer to expect. I believe he has found Jones a timorous man, and thinks others may be concerned for him; and therefore he hopes, by frightening him, that one or another will supply him with money; and Mr. Jones often going to Colonel Purcel's, he imagines that they may be * * *† to get him supplied as formerly; and when he found that would not do, he tried another way, which was by going to confession to Nugent, and took an occasion to express his remorse for the wrongs he had done to Mr. Jones, whereas all the end of his begging pardon was to draw out another

† A word wanting,

relief. My Lady Westmoreland telling me of it, I put 20*l.* into her hands, to be conveyed by Nugent to Brown, provided it might carry him out of the kingdom, which he had declared was his resolution. About that time Brown was taken up, so Nugent never saw him; and his friend Purdon applying to me to help him in this distress, and promising he would go beyond sea as soon as he had his liberty, I took back the 20*l.*, and gave Brown 30*l.* instead thereof; and these are the requitals he makes me, and will do the same to any body that shall be kind to him.

Conway Seymour died on Sunday last, at eight in the morning: the coroner's inquest have sat upon him, and found it a wilful murder. So I suppose Kirk and Cage both abscond; they might otherwise pass their time ill. I hear the doctors and surgeons find fault with one another upon this occasion. Bussier is blamed by them for laying open the wound more than was necessary. He says the fever was the cause of his death, and belonged to the doctors to cure, it having no rise from the wound.

The Duke of Bolton went yesterday for Hampshire, Mr. Overton telling me he had not a convenient opportunity to speak to him. I made use of what I had just before the Duke went. I found him dry and reserved as to any treaty about Aberston, and merely told me, he had no thoughts at present of parting with it; and I likewise showed

an indifference as to buying it, since you had other convenient houses proposed to you; but if Aberston could have been an accommodation to you both, you would have been as fair a chapman as he can expect. He said nothing to me now about the King's buying it. Mr. Pennington sends me this dirty letter for your Grace from Colonel Mordaunt.

Sir Thomas Littleton can't yet resolve about passing his patent for the Treasurership of the Navy, but lets it lie at the Privy Seal. He would first be satisfied how he may make up his accounts, and pass them annually, not caring to rely upon the good nature of the Navy Board for his future quiet and security. He has, therefore, laid before the Lords of the Treasury a memorial of such regulations and methods as, he thinks, ought to be settled, for the easier and quicker dispatch of those accounts which is referred to the Navy Board to be considered of. If they approve of it all will be well; but if they have any material objections, I believe the Treasury will not interpose to overrule them, and then I know not what will become of the place.

There are letters from Mr. Stanhope of the 10th of June, N.S. He writes that the King* is not so well as he was a fortnight before, his face, stomach, belly, and legs being much swelled, with a constant shaking in his head. Since the fright of the tumult, the new ministers are very pressing upon him to

* Of Spain.

send away all the Queen's creatures; and if she goes on to oppose it, they threaten her with a convent. They design sending the Marquis of Leganez to the government of Flanders, and seem fonder of the Duke of Savoy for their king than either the French or the Germans.

My Lord Portland embarked last night for Holland. I have heard no more of his purchase.

I hear that, at Malmesbury, they have put out my Lord Wharton from the office of their Steward, and have given it to my Lord Abingdon.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 27, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 24th. As for the new ministry in Spain, both French and Germans are satisfied with them, or pretend to be so. They write from Vienna, that they are better liked than the last, and the Emperor's Ambassador was early in his caresses to them, insomuch that the Queen took it heinously.

Every body says Sir Rowland Gwyn declines coming into the Customs, and nobody knows the reason of it, I suppose. Tom Newport will have it, my Lord Chancellor and Mr. Montague having told him that they have writ to the King in his behalf.

The soldiers belonging to the late marine regi-

ments continue in their disorders, clamouring for their arrears, the Admiralty having referred it to the Navy Board to make up their accounts, and they, finding it will be made a work of time, grow very impatient, and threaten to pull down the Navy Office. The Admiralty have therefore attended the Lords Justices this day, with the Commissioners of the Navy, but what has been resolved on I know not.

The city thought to go a-birding this year for sheriffs, hoping to augment their revenue by fines, and therefore chose Charles Duncomb and Jeffry Jeffries; but they are like to disappoint them, and talking of holding the office. Sir Josiah Child, who died last week, has made such a disposition of his estate as his family is not likely to agree about. He has left his eldest son no more than was settled on him in marriage with Sir Thomas Cook's daughter, which they reckon about 4,000*l.* per annum. The other son, who is by the present wife, is made heir to the rest, and executor. He will have about 5,000*l.* per annum in land. He has left no legacies to any of his daughters, but has given 2,500*l.* to each of his grandchildren, payable only to the women, when they attain the age of sixteen, and the men at twenty-one; so that his daughter Bullock has had no portion at all, and Mrs. Howland wants part of hers, he having promised her to make her equal to her sister Worcester, who had 20,000*l.* portion, Mrs. Howland only 12,000*l.* He

has left about 1,000*l.* to hospitals, and has ordered only 50*l.* to be expended in his funeral.

They say he does not leave so great an estate as was expected, and that he has several accounts depending, which will either take from his estate, or some will be great losers, particularly the son of Sir John Child, who was governor at Bombay, whose whole estate is got into Sir Josiah's hands.

I just now hear that Duncomb and Jeffries have signed the bonds to hold the shrievalty.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 4, 1699.

I hope Brown will tire himself with his own impertinences, for there is hardly any thing else will put an end to it.

I hope Mr. Boscawen is a little better. The visitants are returned from Chippenham. Sir James Forbes tells me there is to be a match—Mr. Cheeke and Lady Catherine Jones.

I went to see Sir Thomas Littleton yesterday, at Epsom, where, he tells me, his patent lies still at the Privy Seal, and is like to do so till he sees how it shall be possible to pass an account. The Navy Board have made no answer yet to his memorial, and they give him no manner of hopes that they will ease him of the victualling account, which, he thinks, belongs to another office. They tell him,

that, if new methods are endeavoured to be imposed upon them, they shall be obliged to oppose them, or otherwise they promise to make it as easy to him as possible; but he don't know how far that will go, and would rather know what he may certainly depend on. I much question whether he will take this place at last; if he could return to the Treasury it is certain he would do it.

I hear the Duke of Hamilton is going to Scotland. He is a strenuous asserter of the Scotch company; and if it fail, I wish he does not make another use of it, to exasperate things against England, and to cry down the union between the nations as useless to them. Upon the affidavit of a provoked woman I have taken up a priest, who said mass to a Lady Stanley, in Holborn. He proves to be Phillipot, who taught my Lord Brudenell's sons. I expect my Lady Westmoreland will concern herself in his behalf. But the greatest kindness I can do him, is to get him leave to go beyond the sea, which I have proposed to the Lords Justices, and they are not against it.*

* I have omitted two notes, dated 8th and 11th July, that seem of no importance whatever.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 13, 1699.

The Parliament met to-day, and were prorogued to the 24th of next month. Your Grace will see, by the enclosed from Neves, the account we have of Kidd*, the pirate. I think his rogueries will be at an end now, for I do not see how he can escape, the alarm being given every where concerning him.

The disbanded soldiers grow every day more and more tumultuous. They besieged the Duke of Schomberg and the general officers as they were sitting, on Tuesday last, at the Horse Guards, and afterwards went to his house in Pall Mall, and threatened to pull it down. He is gone out of town upon it, and says he will return when he sees orders given for preserving peace. His letter was brought this evening to the Lords Justices, while they were at the Council, and it is ordered that the justices of the peace take care to suppress riots.

My Lord Jersey tells me that nothing appears against Jones and the other priest, Marshall, who was taken up at the same time, and therefore he thinks of discharging them to-morrow.

Poor Bernard has been with me to bemoan his misfortune on being charged, on my Lady Middleton's account, whom he never saw in his life; but innocently enclosed a letter for Mrs. Catharine Morris to a Frenchman of his acquaintance at

* See an after note upon this personage.

Dover. They say my Lady Middleton has been some time preparing to go to her husband, and has no thoughts of returning hither again.

My Lord Manchester talks of going to France on Thursday next, and my Lord Berkeley begins his journey to Ireland on Tuesday; he goes into Gloucestershire, and embarks at Bristol.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 15, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 12th. This mad fellow, Brown, will not cease to be troublesome till his debts plunge him into jail, and then he will be humble enough. The quarrel he has to Jones is the same he has to me—that we have relieved him, and do not continue it. Besides, he has found Jones a fearful creature, and believes, that, by bearing hard upon him, he shall squeeze money out of somebody or another. But that expectation may soon fail him, since my Lord Jersey intends that Jones and Marshall shall voluntarily quit the kingdom, or he will not release them. There is nothing criminal appears against either of them, but theirs and the informer's character makes it necessary to be cautious.

I hear Brown brags in coffee-houses how he imposed upon me, and forced thirty pounds from me, upon pretence that he was taken up for debt;

whereas he only went and lay at a spunging-house, as they call them, where the bailiffs live. He is laying such another stratagem, to get something out of your Grace, by mentioning Smith's name, and pretending he would be gone as soon as a small debt was paid. He will not always be so gentle; in his next letters he will return to railing.

Mr. Constable has been with me, to tell me that he thinks Jones hardly dealt with, that he should be taken up for one thing, and required to leave the kingdom for another. I only desired him, that he would likewise consider my Lord Jersey's circumstances. I supposed information was brought him that Jones corresponded in treasonable matters; and was, besides, a priest. It was a justice in him to put him to no further trouble on the first head, when he found a failure in proofs; but there being no doubt concerning the other, it could not be totally overlooked, and his withdrawing himself, I thought, would not be so great a prejudice to him, as his remaining here ought to be to my Lord Jersey.

I have heard no more of my Lord Bophine's business than I acquainted you with, and cannot tell how they came by their discovery. If it was intended for a secret, it has been ill kept, since I accidentally heard a good part of it last winter.

I spoke with the justices of the peace yesterday, and acquainted them with the Lords Justices' directions, that they should take care to preserve the

peace, and suppress riots, in the manner prescribed by the statute of the 13th of Henry the Fourth. I have likewise desired Mr. Clark to continue the meetings of the general officers, that all accounts may be adjusted, as far as possible. The late disturbance was given by the soldiers dismissed out of the regiment of Foot Guards. One Campbell, that had been a serjeant, pretended to state every man's account, and determined what was due to each man, according to the time he had served, for which he took sixpence a piece of them, amounting in all to five pounds; and when he was called for to justify his way of reckoning, he ran away.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 18, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 15th. Mr. Jones was with me yesterday, and seems strongly persuaded that Brown was the cause of his being taken up, but he has no other reason for it than Brown's declared malice. I told him that I have as great a share of that; and so shall every body else have that once relieves that fellow's necessities, and does not think fit to continue it. I asked him what pique could Brown have against Marshall, to bring him into the same trouble? All he could allege was, that Marshall, being formerly invited to drink a bottle of wine with Brown, declined it.

'Tis certain they mistake the matter; and if they set this fellow's name about for taking up two priests, they will make him more considerable, and grow vainer upon it.

I said something of his apprehensions to my Lord Jersey, that if there were any thing in it, no more weight might be laid upon it than ought to be, but he sees nothing like it. I can't press him to discharge Jones, since he thinks his own quiet depends upon his going away; and it would be the best way, if it would make him easy in it.

What I hear further of Kidd,* that if he be not taken himself by this time, he has made a sad expedition of it. Colonel Blackstone, governor of Maryland, has lately seized some pirates in their return from Madagascar; they were not of Kidd's crew, but say they saw, lying at Madagascar, the bottom of the Adventure galley, which brought Kidd from New York; as also another ship on

* Captain Kidd had been, at an early period of his life, the commander of a British privateer, and afterwards settled at New York. He was a man of a good character, and supposed to be a skilful seaman. About the years 1695 or 1696, Lord Bellamont, Governor of New York, proposed to the impoverished British Government to fit out, by private subscription, a ship-of-war, as the only means of putting down the pirates which infested the West Indies and coast of America. The Admiralty, the Chancellor, Lord Shrewsbury, and the King himself, sanctioned the undertaking. One half of the subscription was promised, but never paid, by the King; but the rest was easily obtained, and Kidd himself, one of the subscribers, was put in command, and sailed upon his expedition. Instead of suppressing the pirates, however, he turned pirate himself, and occasioned vast trouble and annoyance to the rest of the subscribers.

ground, which Kidd had taken from the Turks or Moors, while she was commanded by a Dutchman; but these make no mention what is become of Kidd, or what depredations he has made.

We hear of a duel that was fought last week between my Lord Wharton and Lord Cheyney. The quarrel began at the sessions held in Buckinghamshire. My Lord Cheyney thought himself affronted at my Lord Wharton's sitting on the right hand of the chairman, which, he pretends, belongs to him, as a Scotch viscount; but they say my Lord Wharton has taken the place several times before, when my Lord Cheyney was present, and there was no dispute about it. My Lord Cheyney whispered him in the ear, that he expected satisfaction from him, and he would send him a note where he should meet, but he would have no seconds, nor any body by. My Lord Wharton, having a very short sword, exchanged with Colonel Godfrey for a longer, who by that means understood the business, but was not allowed to have any part in it. However, he kept on the watch, and observed whither they went; and, perceiving they had drawn, made some passes, and were closed, he and some others ran in to part them; they found my Lord Wharton had disarmed, and was in possession of both the swords. They say they both dined afterwards with the justices.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 20, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 17th. Mr. Constable has been with me. I find by him, Mr. Jones is in no haste to comply with the directions for going abroad. I must leave him to settle it as well as he can with my Lord Jersey. I only advise them that they don't make Brown more vain by imagining that he has brought this upon them, or that he was able to do it.

The greatest news we have is, young Mr. Cowper's acquittal at Hertford assizes, for the death of a Quaker lady*. The trial came on yesterday morning, and lasted for nine hours, great number of witnesses being produced on both sides; and the doctors and surgeons came from London to argue against those of their profession in the country, about the symptoms of drowning. Several of the young woman's letters were produced, discovering her passion for Cowper, and some witnesses proved that she had thoughts of making away with herself, and had talked to that purpose. It was expected my Lord Chief Justice Treby would have sat on

* One of the most interesting cases that ever was tried; whether we consider the party-feeling that was excited, the admirable defence of Spencer Cowper for himself and the three gentlemen who were tried with him, the bitter and persecuting attempts to fix the deed upon an innocent man, or the deep tragic incidents of the whole affair, which displays the strong passions of southern lands in the bosom of an English girl, and that girl a Quaker.

that trial, but he left it to Baron Hatsell, as the whole county was run into parties upon this occasion. So every thing has a various gloss upon it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 25, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 22nd. Brown troubles all the world with his letters, to try whom they will make any impression upon; but, till I see more ground than from his own writings, I can't bring myself to believe that he is in the contrivance against Jones.

My Lady Westmoreland presses upon me, as if I could influence my Lord Jersey, and procure Jones his liberty. If he was not over-awed, he would need no intreaty in the case; but, as I know what he is afraid of, I am, perhaps, the most unfit person to speak to him of any body; but he, telling me lately that he had, as it were, leave to dismiss the other man, as one that was of small signification, and, besides, a very infirm man, I told my Lord, that, since this difference was made between the two who were taken up for the same cause, I thought Jones would be excusable, if he brought his *habeas corpus* to get his liberty at present under bail, which would end in his discharge next term, unless he should be charged with being a priest. I think my Lord would like it well enough if he took that method,

and would use no means to clog it. If Mr. Jones, therefore, be uneasy at the close confinement he is under, or if my Lord Jersey would have him remove himself one way or another, this may be fit to be considered; but I shall not propose it to my Lady Westmoreland, for, however I may approve of it, I don't care to be answerable for the consequences of it.

Colonel Godfrey has fallen under the condition Sir Edward Seymour was in some years ago, having his mouth drawn awry. It came upon him without any pain or other warning, and he was not sensible of it, till a gentleman, coming to see him on Friday morning, first took notice of it. He hath since been blooded, blistered, purged, and vomited. He finds himself as well as can be expected under such a discipline. So I hope he will get strength again. I think the doctors call this a touch of the palsy.

My Lord Dorset was set upon on Saturday night by four or five footpads, as he came by Tyburn. He says little of it himself, but I hear they took from him to the value of fifty or sixty pounds, with his gold George. They, seeing him fumbling in his pockets, told him it was not honourable to sink upon them, and they must search him; whereon he threw his money out of the coach, and bid them pick it up. One of them told him, if they did not know him they should use him worse.

The Lords Justices have directed me to send a messenger for one Gore, a justice of the peace in

Somersetshire, upon the complaint of Colonel Pigot, another justice of the peace, who accuses Gore for having publicly drunk King James's health, at a meeting of the Commissioners for Taxes, saying, all they came about was but stuff and sham, since King James would be here by Christmas. One Lawrence, a friend of Gore, is likewise to be secured at the same time, who wrote to Pigot, by way of advice, that he should provide for his own safety, and not be so warm, for a great many of the chief nobility were gone into France, and he might imagine what was their business. I don't know the character of any of these men, but they have an odd way of speaking and writing, whether it be in jest or earnest.

I thought to have spoke to my Lord Chancellor this morning about the custosship of Worcestershire, but he excused his not coming to the Lords Justices, it being the last day of the Chancery hearings, and he had nobody to supply his place, the Master of the Rolls being indisposed.

This evening, Mr. Ellis comes to me from the Duchess of Ormond, to tell me my Lord Coventry was her near relation; and they, having the custosship in their family for some time, desired it might continue so. I bid Mr. Ellis tell her, that your Grace had shewn the same concern, and I endeavoured to let my Lord Chancellor know it that morning; but now I would speak to him in both their names.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 1, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 29th. I suppose there is no fear but my Lord Coventry will qualify himself for the custosship, since, as Mr. Ellis tells mé, both he and his lady writ to the Duchess of Ormond to secure it for him. I know not what to say to my Lady Westmoreland's positiveness about Brown. I hope she does not think that more would be done for Mr. Jones, if it were believed that he suffered on Brown's account. I cannot but know from whence my Lord Jersey's caution proceeds; and therefore I don't expect he should act otherwise. I believe no solicitations would prevail with him. Therefore, Mr. Jones must either think of going, lying where he is, or procuring his liberty by *habeas corpus*. If the first of them be inconvenient to him, he ought to choose the last, and not delay it. As for my Lord Jersey's taking an obligation from him to appear when sent for, I think it is not to be expected, since he concludes he is a priest, and that, he will fear, may be thought a licensing him to stay here; but if he brings himself before a judge, he will have nothing to take notice of but the warrant he was taken up by, which, making no mention of his being a priest, that will not come into question, and I don't believe will allow his being charged with it; besides, there is no evidence of it. All he

will suffer this way is the charge of a *habeas corpus*, which may be three pounds, and an attendance the first and last day of next term, which, I think, he can have no great dread of, if he will not avoid it by stepping on the other side.

I had a letter lately from Lord Portland, who desires me to assure your Grace of his respects and acknowledgements for the continuance of your kindness to him. Sir James Forbes has been telling my Lord Steward, after you have been in Northamptonshire, you intend to see the * * *† and Chatsworth. My Lord Steward seems very well pleased with the thoughts of it, and will prepare to make you welcome. Perhaps you did not desire Sir James should be so forward, but it is his way, and I hope there is no harm in it. If you are at leisure to go that way, I don't know but it may put my Lord Steward in good humour for all the winter. He talks of going out of town on Friday next.

I believe my Lord Chancellor may be going to Bath next week. If he continue there till your Grace's return from Gloucestershire, I suppose you will see one another, and then you will know his sentiments in all points.

The Scotch schoolmaster I mentioned in my last was found guilty of high misdemeanour. To make it capital, the law requires a proof of ——, as well as ——; the evidence went only to the latter. He

† A word illegible, apparently Berkeleys.

is sentenced, as Rigby was, to stand in the pillory, but his fine is only 100*l.*

I had a letter yesterday from Sir William Beeston, of the 24th of April. He writes that Benbow was not then returned from the Spanish coast; but they heard that, it being refused to the Scots to set their men at liberty who were cast away near Carthagena, they were resolved to resent it, and to fall on the Spaniards, wherever they met them, either by land or sea. This will be a way to push things quickly on to a rupture. We have never pretended to demand any Englishman that was seized trading in those parts, unless it were vessels carrying negroes, pursuant to the *assiento*.

I have a letter this day from the Chancellor of Ireland, of the 26th. He thinks the Commissioners of Inquiry are not very unanimous. They have lately sent for my Lord Bellew, and examined him concerning the reversal of his and his father's outlawry. They think him very cautious and reserved in his answers, and pretend not to be satisfied with them. I hope he will himself send an account of what questions have been asked him, and what he answered, which I should be glad to see, since some of the orders he has obtained have passed through my hands.

Mr. Ellis is just come from the Duchess of Ormond, who tells me that she thinks her brother Coventry as firm to this government as any gentleman in England.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 3, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 31st. Brown's petition to my Lord Chancellor is a very extraordinary piece of nonsense and phrenzy. If the fellow were quite in his senses, or quite out of them, one should better know what to do with him.

I will endeavour to wait on my Lord Chancellor to-morrow, and then, perhaps, I shall know what he has resolved in relation to my Lord Coventry.

I have seen a letter to-day, of the 6th of June, from Pensylvania, which says, Kidd was come into that bay with a sloop and a ship that stood off and on. The sloop's men went ashore to mend some of their iron work, and were rather kindly received by the inhabitants than otherwise. They may go any where for the Pensylvanians; but the collector of customs there, being an honest man, had given notice to Colonel Nicholson, at Virginia, and was in hopes he would give timely orders to a frigate which attended that plantation. Since Kidd is got so far to the northward, I believe he will not be able to reach the Scots, which is so much the better. Mr. Grey writes to me from Barbadoes, that he hears Kidd has 400,000*l.* on board; but that I don't believe.

There is a report of one Mr. Hoste, a gentleman of 2,000*l.* per annum, in Norfolk, that he has shot

himself. Sir Robert Rich has been very like to die with spitting of blood, but my Lord Haversham has stopped it by his remedies.

I suppose Mr. Yard has acquainted your Grace how the lieutenancies of Yorkshire are disposed: the West Riding to my Lord Burlington, the North to Lord Irwin, and the Duke of Newcastle to have the East Riding, with the government of Hull. I believe you may have heard that my Lord Fairfax asked for Hull, and, instead thereof, it was intended to make him lieutenant of the East Riding. The Duke of Newcastle showed some inclination to the government before the King went over; but I thought then it was intended to be otherwise disposed of. I hear some of those who are to meet at Boughton have promised my Lord Steward they will make him a visit at Chatsworth.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 5, 1699.

I waited on my Lord Chancellor to-day, who tells me he had writ to the King about the custosship of Worcestershire, after the manner you had mentioned it, in your letter to my Lord Jersey, by which he understood that your Grace was indifferent whether your Grace or Lord Coventry were the custos, and he supposed the King's directions would be, that it should be disposed of as you would have it.

I had not an account on Thursday of the judgement that was given that day at Lambeth, when a sentence of deprivation was pronounced against the Bishop of St. David's, upon three heads—simony, extortion in taking exorbitant fees for his instruments, and giving certificates to persons of their having taken the oaths when they had not, which in the canon law is called forgery. He is, besides, condemned to pay about 700*l.* for costs. The Bishops present at the judgement were—London, Worcester, Salisbury, and Lichfield; they delivered their opinion of his being guilty on each head, only the Bishop of London doubted whether the proof came up to simony, and was satisfied as to the rest. The Bishop of Rochester, who had been at the former hearings, did not come to the conclusion. Just before the sentence was pronounced, the Bishop of St. David's offered a paper, which he read himself, since the court refused it, importing his resuming his privilege, though he had waved it two or three years ago, in the House of Lords.

One Bellingham, a disbanded captain, is taken up and committed to Newgate, for counterfeiting exchequer bills and bank notes. I was at his examination, with the trustees for the exchange of exchequer bills. After some shuffling, he owned the fact, that he had altered five pound bills into forty.* It was thought he had some great secret in doing it, but he said the manner of it was only with

* So written, but probably £50.

aqua-fortis, which, when it had lain a little on the ink, he washed it with fair water, and that kept the paper from being discoloured. He had practised but very little, being found out in time. This man had robbed the mails with Arthur, who was hanged by his evidence.

The Bishop of Oxford is translated this day to Lichfield, the dean may now go on.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 8, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 5th. On Sunday last, Mr. Jones desired to speak with me, and told me that the day before Mr. Yard had sent for him, and let him know that if he did not think of leaving the kingdom immediately, my Lord Jersey would commit him to Newgate; and that my Lady Orkney, who had concerned herself in his behalf, had advised him to go away, and no notice would be taken if he should afterwards come back again. He being very unwilling to leave his affairs here, since there was no occasion for such a treatment, and pressing me for my advice and assistance, I told him he was at liberty to take out a *habeas corpus*, and put himself upon trial next term; but before he did it, my opinion was, that he should let my Lady Orkney know it, with his reasons for so doing; that he being taken up for treasonable prac-

tices, may be thought to have fixed a guilt upon himself for running away from justice; but when he had cleared himself of this aspersion, by offering himself to trial, he could then go away with reputation. He told me he would take that method; and I suppose the advice he received yesterday from his friends might confirm him in it.

I had a letter from the Chancellor of Ireland yesterday, of the 2nd of August. By what he now writes, I don't find my Lord Bellew has been very reserved in his answers to the commissioners. He has owned to them that he was obliged to release and deliver up to my Lord Raby a mortgage he had of 2,000*l.* upon his estate. I know not what he could have told them more, unless he would have added a release to my Lord Romney of the mean profits he received out of his estate during the time he held it.

Mr. Methuen writes that the commissioners were preparing to go into the country, to take a fuller information of the value of the forfeited lands; they would return to Dublin three weeks before the time their commission was to expire, and then make up their report.

Sir Edmund Harrison tells me there are various reports in town about Kidd; some say he has surrendered himself to my Lord Bellamont upon terms, others that he, distrusting my Lord Bellamont, had put to sea again. They talk of proposals he has made at Long Island, to give 30,000*l.* to his owners, who fitted him out, and 20,000*l.* to any person who should

procure him his pardon. From this uncertainty of reports, all Sir Edmund concludes is, that Kidd is on the New York coast, and in all probability will be seized there. The Old East India Company are very inquisitive after Kidd, and if he be taken with any treasure, it is very likely they may claim it, for the indemnifying them.

Sir Thomas Littleton had his hearing yesterday at the Treasury, but nothing was determined, the Navy Board being against establishing new methods, and declaring there was no occasion for them. Sir Thomas is therefore under the same dissatisfaction, and seemed resolved against taking out his patent; but I believe he will not persist in it.

Mr. Montague was not at this hearing, for my Lord Chancellor and he went yesterday morning to make my Lord Orford a visit at Chippenham, from whence they will return on Thursday next. I am told that my Lord Chancellor thinks rather of going to Tunbridge than to Bath.

The Duchess of Bolton landed on Saturday last near Bristol; the Duke and she went and lay at Sir Robert Southwell's house, and are to be at Hackwood to-night.

Sir John Bolles has played a mad prank at Lincoln assizes. He sat upon the bench with Mr. Justice Gold, and took upon him to govern the court, which the judge reprehending him for, he told him he was a member of parliament, that he stood up for the liberties of England, and would

bring the judge upon his knees at the bar of the House of Commons. The judge committed him, and ordered an indictment to be drawn up against him; but, at the earnest intercession of the justices, it was let fall, who said no other bill could be found against him, but that he was distracted, as sometimes happens to him when he falls into drinking, and wants sleep. But I think, if I had been there, if I brought him off, it should be by making him a madman by record.

The Bishop of Lichfield did his homage to-day before the Lords Justices, who sat in a semi-circle, the Archbishop in the midst of them. After he had repeated the oath, they all kissed him, which he received kneeling.

The Bishop of St. David's, notwithstanding he pretended to resume his privilege, brought an appeal to the delegates on Saturday last; but, having deferred it so long, orders were issued in the meantime for seizing his temporalities in the King's name.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 10, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 7th. I suppose there is nothing done to hinder my Lord Coventry's having the custosship with a good grace. I have seen a letter he writ to the Duchess of Ormond, wherein he mentions his having taken

the oaths to this government, and his readiness to do it again, and to keep them when he has done it. I hope nothing will happen to alter this good resolution.

I have had some discourse with my Lord Jersey about Jones. He charged me with knowing something of his intentions to take out a *habeas corpus*. I would not own that; neither did I disown that if Brown had any hand in bringing this trouble upon him, it was my opinion he should stand it, rather than betray any fear or guilt on that account. He told me that Jones's friends had made a great use of Brown's name; but he saw no reason to think he was any way concerned. I don't find that he is against the taking out a *habeas corpus*, for he would willingly be rid of Jones any way; but he wishes he had resolved it before he told Mr. Yard that he would go beyond sea. He added, that Captain Baker, who is brought into this business by my Lord Stamford, talks of charging Jones before a judge with being a priest, but thinks he can have no proof of it. I told him that, without proof, the judge would take no notice of it; and it would be pretty strange to see a man's* changed upon him, when there is no warrant to express it.

I thought, too, before one gave way to the committing a man to Newgate, as a priest, one should be a little satisfied whether the King would have

* There would appear to be something left out here; probably the word "accusation."

such a trial proceed, since he would find himself sufficiently embarrassed if any such sentence should be executed. Upon the whole, I think my Lord Jersey will not be dissatisfied at the *habeas corpus*, though he rather wishes he would be gone. I suppose the thing is now gone so far, that it is not longer to be deliberated on; and I hope whatever is done will prove for the best. It is a point of honour and justice that Mr. Jones's friends should be satisfied he is not abandoned, even though they mistake the cause of his suffering.

All the talk of the town is about a tragical piece of gallantry at Newgate. I don't doubt but your Grace has heard of a bastard son of Sir George Norton, who was under a sentence of death for killing a dancing-master in the streets. The Lords Justices reprieved him, till they heard from the judge that no exception was to be taken at the verdict. It being signified to the young man, on Tuesday last in the afternoon, that he was to die the next day, his aunt, who was sister to his mother, brought two doses of opium, and they took it between them. The ordinary came soon after to perform his functions; but, before he had done, he found so great alterations in both persons, that it was no hard matter to find out the cause of it. The aunt frankly declared she could not survive her nephew, her life being wrapt up in his; and he declared, that the law having put a period to his life, he thought it no offence to choose the way he

would go out of the world. The keeper sent for his apothecary to apply remedies, who brought two vomits. The young man refused to take it, till they threatened to force it down by instruments. He told them, since he hoped the business was done, he would make himself and them easy, and swallowed the potion, and his aunt did the like. The remedy worked upon her, and set her a vomiting, but had no effect on Mr. Norton, so that he dozed away gradually, and by eight that evening was grown senseless, though he did not expire till nine next morning. He was fully resolved upon the business, for he had likewise a charged pistol hid in the room.

The aunt was carried to a neighbouring house, and has a guard upon her. They say she is like to recover; if she does, it will be hard if she suffer for such a transport of affection.

I have seen Sir Thomas Littleton to-night, who is still unresolved about passing his patent. He has seen Mr. Montague since his coming back from Chippenham, who thinks the Treasury should have made more of that hearing. He will therefore let his patent lie till they meet again.

The inclosed letter might have been sent to your Grace a nearer way.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 17, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 14th. Jones was with me this morning, and tells me, my Lord Chief Justice Treby bailed him on Tuesday last. Mr. Baker was by to approve of the bail, but he brought no new charge against him. I told him the account I had from Mr. Baker of the Brown that comes to him, and he has nothing to contradict it. I suppose, therefore, we have the truth of that matter.

I send your Grace a paper,* which, I believe, you will think ought, at least at present, to be kept as a secret. My Lord Peterborough solicited me in the winter to have an interview with me; but he doing it by my Lady Dicks, of Somerset House, whom I did not know, and not appearing in it himself, I had good cause to put it off. But he, sending Mr. Clement to me on Tuesday last, whom, perhaps, your Grace may have seen, he being designed to go secretary to my Lord Bellamont, and has published some little treatises about trade, whatever aversion I had to this meeting, I thought I could not well avoid it; and I did not know but I might as well draw some use from it, as fear the prejudice of it. I went privately in a hackney-coach, without any servant. I don't desire to have my name up upon such occasion, which is liable to odd construc-

* The paper which follows this letter.

tions; and I remember what a jealousy my Lord Portland lay under last winter on that account; but, as nothing shall pass between him and me which your Grace shall not be acquainted with, I hope I may avoid censure. I am sure I will do nothing that I shall be ashamed of whenever it comes to light. For my own part, I am very well satisfied so far. I was glad to hear that Brown had found a way to him again, and that he could not see what use to make of him.

I thought it best he should rightly understand how Brown came to be at all taken notice of, and to let the lord see it was his own fault if he did not live in quiet. I was glad to see the scene opening, and to discover what he would be at, that all this finding fault and teasing of people is only to procure himself a good pension. I perceive I may know when I please upon what terms he will sit still; and though it shall not be thought worth while to grant them, it may be of use to know them. If I am to make further steps, I desire to be advised. Perhaps it will not be long before he sends the same man to me, either to propose another meeting, or to know whether I have considered what he said to me. If this matter is to be improved, I believe I can lead him to a formal declaration, though he may be very shy of it at present. If there be as much known as is necessary, I can with greater ease stop here.

Jones tells me that Brown has disappeared of late; therefore it is supposed he is sent somewhere into

the country after this *eclaircissement.* I expect to see him forthcoming again, and that he will be soon turned out of pay; then we shall know who last supplied him by his railing at them.

My Lord Chancellor writes to me the inclosed. This evening I have sent him word that your Grace had already signified your being very desirous that my Lord Coventry should have the custosship given him in the best manner, so as it might not be thought to be your leavings; but, however, I would write again to your Grace, to satisfy him in that particular. I hope his Lordship does not imagine that I moved the King in my Lord Coventry's behalf; I am sure it was never in my thoughts to do any thing so disrespectful to his Lordship; but I perceive my Lord Coventry is very fond of the employment, even to the taking indirect ways to come at it. I hope he will mend all in executing it right.

I hear my Lord Tankerville is very ill, more like to die than to live. He has had a severe fit of the gout, which at last got beyond the stomach, for, they say, it is in his head. He has not slept these four nights, notwithstanding his taking laudanum. He was yesterday light-headed, but yet he knew people; to-day he has been much worse.

The King has signified to the Lords Justices, that Henry Vincent and Mr. Coleby should supply the vacancies in the Victualling Commission. The last was recommended by the Admiralty, with Phineas

Bowles, formerly their secretary; but Papillon had great exceptions to him. Mr. Montague will be well satisfied that Harry Vincent has succeeded, being a very honest man in the Saxon Corner.*

It is very difficult to get a council to meet; there were but three attended to-day; another council therefore is appointed on Tuesday, and the councillors who are in or near town are to be summoned by letter, there being an absolute necessity of having a number that day, since the parliament is to meet the Thursday following.

[*Paper drawn up by Mr. Vernon for the private perusal of the Duke of Shrewsbury.*]†

August 16, 1699.

Lord Peterborough, in his discourse to Mr. Clements, said a great deal of the esteem he always had for the Duke of Shrewsbury, and the desires he had to live well with him; but he always found a coldness from the Duke, even while both of them were carrying on the business of the revolution. That, notwithstanding the many advances he made to the Duke, and the confidences he had placed in him, the Duke never trusted him but with one secret only, which he had drawn from him by shewing he was apprised of it before. That was when he went to him, and made his compliments,

* So written.

† For the explanation of this, see the commencement of the preceding letter.

upon his last taking the seals. Lord Peterborough outstayed the company, and fell into discourse with the Duke about the reasons of his coming into employment again, which Lord Peterborough said was a great surprise to many people, and himself in particular. The Duke answered, that if he could furnish him with a good reason for his coming in he would oblige him, for he knew of none; whereupon Lord Peterborough replied, that he having been let into the secret of some messages, letters, and discourses that had passed between the Duke, Sir James Montgomery, and others, he comprehended the reason of his taking an employment, and on that account excused him, and no other. The Duke then, laying his hands on Lord Peterborough's arms, said, there is nothing so strange but it may come to pass; one would hardly have expected that Sir James Montgomery should be able to make a secretary to King William. But this, he said, he had never told the King of, and he had too much honour ever to make any public use of it. He added, that he had not the same esteem for Lord Orford, and should own it any where; for those he had reason to be dissatisfied with, should find he did not fear them, but was ready to answer them in any place, even with his sword in his hand.

He went into a discourse against the Duchess of Norfolk, calling her several times bitch and prostitute; that the remembrance of her old amours with the Duke made her interest herself in his

behalf, and shew her malice against him; but there was no likelihood he would have put much trust in her, since, about that time, she made an offer of herself to him to be a spy, and to betray her father. When he reproached her with being capable of so much baseness, she said she hated the court at St. Germain's, and particularly the Queen, and she would not hazard Prayton for their sakes. She thought my Lord very much changed from his revolutionary principles, if he would not embrace such an opportunity; she might have it in her power to be very serviceable. She saw the Lord Marlborough and Lord Godolphin coming every week, or oftener, to her father's house, when any cloud hung over the government; and when it was fair weather again, they would stay away two or three months. She did not pretend to serve the government for nothing; but her father having a pension of 1,000*l.* per annum, she expected she should be paid;—my Lord and she should share it.

This, he said, he acquainted the King with; but one might be sure he could not trust such a woman with any secrets of his own, and nothing was more improbable than that he should rail at the King before her.

He talked as if he had been informed of many contrivances to ensnare and ruin him; that he was forced to be upon his guard; and for these three years he had not gone any where, or spoke with any body, without noticing it down in his table-book.

I told him I was sorry he created himself so much uneasiness; I was sure it was in his own power to make himself and others more at quiet, if he would but take half the pains to show a peaceable temper that he does to shew a restless one. I did not know any one that would disturb him, but would rather serve him if they could. Then he run out into his being ill-used, and he would show he was not a man to put it up; he would live well with people or ill with them, as they behaved themselves towards him; but he must see the change made, and the effects of it. He had been turned out disgracefully, and expected an amends to be made him; but he did not mean it by being restored to any of his employments, for he declared he would accept of none; and for any thing else it was not a time to explain it; but he would have me consider what he had said; and if I had a mind to speak with him hereafter, he would give me an opportunity for it, and make me a frank answer to any just hint I would ask him.

He talked likewise of my Lord Sunderland, how ungrateful the party had been to him, after the services he had done them. That he understood they took a pretence to suspect him on his account, whereas he took great pains to restrain him following his own resentments; that my Lord Sunderland had told him that he must and would be his enemy, while he and the party were at variance, which, he said, he could not take ill from him, but

commended his frankness, considering whom he had to deal with.

I told him the Duke of Shrewsbury had always shewn himself a mild reconcilable temper; he might judge of him by his late behaviour towards his brother,* in procuring him his office in the Ordonnance. He said that was no mark of good disposition towards him; for his brother was one who would cut his throat, if they would have him; and he had not come near him these two years.

At the beginning of his discourse he talked of his little friend, my Lord Wharton; and his better friend, my Lord Stamford; and that in general all the whigs had treated him ill; and he would ask how much they had bettered themselves by falling out with their friends, and by *remaining*† with Lord Sunderland?

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 1, 1699.

I suppose Mr. Montague has acquainted your Grace with the account I carried yesterday to the Lords Justices from my Lord Bellamont, of his having Kidd in his custody at Boston, and that he had secured part of his effects, to the value of about 10,000*l.*, and had sent to seize his ship, which he had concealed near Hispaniola, wherein might be

* Colonel Mordaunt, whom the Duke, as we have seen, served so zealously.

† So written, but apparently by mistake.

about 60,000*l.* or 70,000*l.* more; but I wish those he left in trust have not run away with it.

Mr. Montague can likewise inform you how uneasy Colonel Mordaunt is, that he is pressed to have people bound with him for the faithful discharge of his office, which was more than was required of Mr. Bertie, who gave only his own bond. I met him accidentally yesterday, and found him much disturbed at it. I thought him resolved rather to let the office alone than to suffer himself to be thus distinguished.

We had a foreign post to-day; it is the first only of the two that are due. I see nothing from ——* but about the review. As to the Holstein matters, they busy in rebuilding the old forts and adding new ones. I think the Danes will not oppose force against it; at present they draw their troops only to the most convenient places for hindering any more Swedes coming over. That which makes the Danes so temperate, is their King's being much worse in his health since he came to Copenhagen; he is so very weak as not to be able to stir out of his bed without three or four men to lift him. They have now prevailed with him to admit his own son, the Prince, into the Cabinet Council, which he would never hear of before, though his son be twenty years of age; but the King always answered before that,—his father would never allow him to come into the Council while he was Prince.

* A word illegible: Paris, I imagine, it ought to be.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 19, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 16th. There is nothing yet said whither the King will come at his first landing; I can't think but it will be directly to Kensington, and from thence he may go to Hampton Court, or Windsor. By the Tuesday's letters that arrived yesterday from Holland, the King has sent for the yacht and convoy, and it is said he will be at the Hague on Saturday next. If that be so, I still imagine that it will be about the middle of the first week in October before he embarks; and if he would go to Newmarket, the plate and matches will be most over before he can get thither; and, in all probability, his coming over so early is to consider matters that will not admit of delay.

My Lord Jersey is sent for by the same post; accordingly he goes to-morrow to Harwich, where the yacht will wait for him. I am glad we are over that doubt, whether there would be any occasion for his going or not.

I sent my Lord Chancellor, last Thursday, a copy of Sir William Beeston's letter, upon which he was pleased to write to me yesterday, and to acknowledge the former letters I sent him upon your Grace's arrival here.* He says the waters have agreed so ill with him of late, that he fears he shall return to

* It is probable from this expression, that Shrewsbury visited London between the 17th of August and the 1st of September, during which period there is a lapse in the correspondence.

town in a worse state of health than he went; but his greatest concern is, that your Grace found yourself so much altered since you left Tunbridge; but he still hopes this will not hinder your coming in to be helpful to the King and nation. He does not say when he will be in town; but I suppose he will not defer it, the King's arrival being so near.

I have just now seen Harry Ireton, who arrived here yesterday; but it was Saturday se'nnight that he came from Loo. He asked the King whether he thought of going to Newmarket this year, but he could not find he did. He believes the King will not be at the Hague till next week. Mr. Andrew Newport is lately dead, in Shropshire: it is thought he has left Thomas Newport his heir.

My Lord Jersey has called here this evening; he tells me Captain Andrews has persuaded him to go by Margate; he will lie at Canterbury to-morrow night; he will go directly to Loo, without calling at the Hague. He still talks as if he would make use of this opportunity to press for more ease. I tell him he had as well let it alone, since it will not be granted him.

The King has appointed Count Frize, a Saxon, to succeed Mr. Cresset as Envoy Extraordinary at the Court of Brandenburg. My Lord Lonsdale scruples at passing his Privy Seal; he has acquainted the Lords Justices with two exceptions he makes to it. One is his being a foreigner; the other, that his warrant was countersigned by Mr. Blathwayt.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 21, 1699.

I have received from Reading a particular of the Burghfeild rents, which is inclosed.

My Lord Jersey lay last night at Canterbury; the wind being fair, I suppose he will be in Holland to-morrow.

We have had no council to-day, there being no attendance. The clerks are to take care to get a number on Tuesday, when it is to be resolved to what time the Parliament shall be prorogued.

I had letters yesterday from my Lord Bellamont, of the 24th of July. He has found it necessary to put Kidd into irons; and, besides, he is at forty shillings per week charge for the secure keeping him in prison. My Lord has used great care and industry in finding out Kidd's effects, which were dispersed and concealed in several places; the whole is put into the hands of a committee appointed by the Council at Boston, and it is computed that the value of what is already secured may be about 14,000*l*. I question whether any more will be met with, since they are informed by some of them who came in the sloop with Kidd, that the ship, the Quedah Merchant, was set on fire near Hispaniola, Kidd having met with people belonging to Curacoa and Antega, who carried away the goods to those places.

The East India Company came down in a full

body this morning to the Lords Justices, to desire that the plunder brought home by Kidd might be sequestered for making satisfaction to those who suffered by his depredations. So many of those principal men appearing on this occasion, shews they intend to make all the bustle about it they can. I was very glad, from the beginning, that Kidd fell into my Lord Bellamont's hands rather than any others. He tells me, likewise, he has secured both the Commissioners that Kidd had with him.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 23, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 20th, and shall send the inclosed this evening to my Lord Sunderland. Mr. Guy is lately come from Althorpe; he speaks much more doubtingly of my Lord's coming to town, than Sir James Forbes did.

My Lord Chancellor came to town last night. I endeavoured to wait on him this morning, but he was gone out.

We have two mails wanting from Holland; so we have no more certainty when the King will be at the Hague.

I hope your Grace's shortness of breath will go off as easily as your spitting of blood has done.

Mr. Smith has not been well. There is no expectation that Sir Robert Rich can recover.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 26, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 23rd, and am very sorry to hear of relapses into all the parts of your former distemper. Since your Grace has no good opinion of Kensington Square, I hope you may find yourself better at Earl's Court, if you would be pleased to make use of it. I saw Mr. Guy to-day, who makes you a voluntary offer of it. I know no objection to it but what may be called a fantastical one,* on account of the owner of it; but I suppose one may be at liberty to sleep and breathe where one can. The house is entirely empty and locked up; if your Grace will accept of it, he desires only to have notice of it, that it may be aired against the time you would use it.

I think my Lord Chancellor has seen very few since he came to town; he sent his excuse to-day to the Lords Justices for not being with them.

I hear Dr. Gibbons has advised him to take physic, and I suppose he does it at Mortlock; they say he has had some little swelling under his eye, but that it is gone down again. Dr. Talbot made his homage to-day for the bishoprick of Oxford.

The Lords Justices have ordered Sir Thomas Littleton's papers to be brought to the Council, which are to be considered on Thursday sen'night. The Commissioners of the Navy, the Auditors of the

* Mr. Guy was the bosom friend of Lord Sunderland.

Impress, Mr. Twitty, and Sir Thomas ——* Maddocks, and Hubbald are to have notice to attend.

It was resolved this day at Council, that the Parliament should be prorogued to the 24th of October. I hear Colonel Mordaunt has sent to George Clark not to leave him out of the list of half-pay, which he still thinks himself entitled to, as not being otherwise provided for. I suppose, therefore, he thinks no more of the Treasurership.

The French letters came in this evening, which tell us that Mons. Pomponne† is dead of an apoplexy, in the eighty-third year of his age, and that the Comte d'Avaux is the likeliest to succeed him.

I hear Thomas Newpert was misinformed concerning his uncle's will, who, they say, has left his estate to my Lord Newpert's second son.

My Lord Spencer‡ is come this afternoon from Althorpe. His marriage is concluded on with Lady Anne Churchill. I don't know how soon they will be married,§ but I find my Lord Sunderland will come up to the wedding.

* Officers here written by mistake.

† For some time Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Louis XIV., but dismissed by Louis, it is supposed, in consequence of the intrigues of the Colbert family; he was received into favour again, however.

‡ The son of Lord Sunderland. He had lately lost his first wife, and was now about to be married to Anne, daughter of Lord Marlborough.

§ Marlborough opposed the marriage for some time, and seems to have had strong objections to Lord Spencer, whose harsh manners and violent whig principles suited not with the courtly and temperate general.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Sept. 28, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 25th. We had two posts this day from Holland; the last mentions that the King was taken with a little shivering on Friday last, but I have a letter from my Lord Albermarle of Saturday, who says he was then very well again, that he had no sign of a fever, nor felt any pain; he supposed he had got a little cold in hunting, but that it was quite over. One would be glad to hear it confirmed by the next letters.

The Duke of Zell intended to be going homeward early on Saturday; I don't hear he went. I suppose the King's indisposition might make him defer his journey till Monday.

My Lord Albermarle tells me they should go from thence in ten or twelve days; whether he means from Holland or Loo only, I cannot determine, but he adds that they shall be soon in England.

My Lord Portland writes me word that he hears the King will make a very short stay at the Hague; he does not come over with him, and hopes not to be long behind him. My Lord Jersey landed at Rotterdam on Friday; I don't doubt but he went next day to Loo.

The King has signified his pleasure to the Lords Justices, that the Spanish Ambassador* should be

* Colonna, Marquis de Canales, between whom and William III. existed a long personal hatred. His offence on the present occasion

required to depart the kingdom in eighteen days, on account of his late memorial, which Mr. Blathwayt terms insolent and seditious.

I hear to-day that my Lord Chancellor has admitted of some visits, and therefore I design to wait on him to-morrow. My Lord Spencer was with him, and he asked very obligingly about his father's health, and kept up a discourse about him, which he did not do the last time my Lord came from Althorpe.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 30, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 27th. You are not used to be much pitied for the pain in your knee; but it is always thought not to continue long enough. I have heard of people who have been much troubled with sweats on their breasts, and yet have not had their lungs affected; I hope, therefore, you will escape as well as they.

I saw my Lord Chancellor yesterday; I think he looks very well. He expressed himself very much

consisted in presenting to the Lords Justices a remonstrance of the most vehement and indignant kind, against the negociations between England and France, regarding a second treaty for the partition of the Spanish succession. The first had been rendered null by the death of the Electoral Prince of Bavaria; and William, with the Earl of Portland, Marshall Tallard, and the Grand Pensionary of Holland, had been busily employed all the summer in framing a new scheme of partition.

concerned for your Grace's indisposition. What he said as to public affairs was, that he hoped the King would keep himself upon the defensive at the opening of this session, and not propose any thing for angry people to lay hold of, who watch for such an occasion. I can't but think it good advice, and wish the King may follow it. His Lordship went that morning to the Lords Justices for the first time, and settled the message to be delivered to the Spanish Ambassador; in which they were directed to follow the precedent of sending away Don Bernardo de Salinas, in King Charles's time. Mr. Yard furnished them with a very exact account, extracted out of Secretary Coventry's books. They would otherwise have been in the dark about it; for though it appeared by this extract that Sir Joseph Williamson carried the message, and some letters passed between him and Don Bernardo about it, yet he remembered nothing of it. Their Excellencies thinking it fit that I should carry the message, I went to him this morning to Isleworth, and when I had delivered the message, at his desire, I repeated it again distinctly, that he might write it. I know not how his master may resent it, but I thought him overjoyed at the receipt of it: he told me he was very sorry he had it not last night. I asked him, why?—and he said he should have slept the better; but he told me, withal, there was nothing in his paper that was not exactly conformable to his instructions; and he had fresh orders sent him to repeat the same things in stronger

terms, which my coming would now prevent. His answer was, that he would exactly obey the King's order in every thing, and in all places. His secretary formerly told me that he was weary to the last degree of being here, by reason they took no care of supplying him; and were it not for the danger he should run at home, by leaving his station before he had leave, he never would have stayed here so long. He did as good as tell me that Providence had found out a way for his deliverance. He desired I would procure him passports, and let him have a guard, if he saw an occasion for it, to conduct him to the place of embarking. I told him I would acquaint the Lords Justices with it; and I suppose it will be thought necessary to grant it, if they could protect him from his creditors. I believe if he can persuade them to patience, he will not desire it.

He took notice of its being said, that the paper was delivered by his order, which he assured me was otherwise; that his secretary had only orders to read the paper; but when any of the Lords Justices desired a copy of it, he did not refuse it them. I don't believe I could ever have found the Ambassador in so good humour on any other occasion; he did not come to meet me, pretending he had taken physic, but he would needs conduct me to my coach.

We had Tuesday's letters yesterday from Holland, which tell us the King had no more symptoms of an ague. He went from Daren on Tuesday to my Lord Albermarle's house, near Zutphen; my Lord Romney

and my Lord Jersey waited on him thither, which last arrived at Loo on Sunday evening. The King was to be at Loo again last night; there was no mention made when he would come to the Hague, but Mr. Cardonnell thinks it will not be till this day se'nnight. One would think by these delays his Majesty sees no haste for his coming, if it be not advisable to call a new parliament.

The French post of Wednesday last is just now arrived. The day for my Lord Manchester's entry is fixed on the eighth of November, their style. I inclose a copy of their news.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 3, 1699.

Sir Robert Rich* died on Sunday night. My Lord Marlborough would be glad his brother should succeed him. I wish he may be gratified in it, but I am afraid there are some who dislike it. There is now a talk as if Sir Rowland Gwynn had waited for this vacancy, having more a mind to the Admiralty than to the Custom House. I find the King would still give him the latter, if he will take it.

* A member of the Admiralty Commission.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 10, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 7th, and am sorry you should have reason to write so despairingly of your health. Since there are means of recovering it, I don't believe any one will oppose your making use of them, if you judge it necessary.

I suppose my Lord Jersey writes to your Grace to make you the offer of his house in the Park, for he mentions it in his letter to me; but I fear that is as much to be objected against as Earl's Court, in respect of the distance to Kensington, and perhaps you may remember you were nowhere else so ill.

His Lordship tells me the business he is about will be finished in two or three days. The Emperor's ministers do not meddle with it now, but have three months' time allowed them to come in. If they are still and quiet in the meantime, I take that for a concurrence; but if they are clamorous, they may make foul work.

The Paris letters that came in this evening, tell us that the new Comptroller of Finances has found a debt upon them of forty millions, which had been overlooked, and yet must unavoidably be paid. How he makes it out I don't know; but he says they are thought to be in a worse condition than ever was known. I hope it is a good sign of a lasting peace; I don't know any body that is in a state for war. He adds, that they now think of seriously reforming

their troops, and other changes. I suppose, therefore, we may all rely on this last agreement.

I had letters yesterday from Ireland, of the 4th inst. The Lords Justices and the Lord Chancellor have been taking informations concerning several Irish officers, lately arrived there from France, some of which, it seems, have talked big, as if their day were a coming. It does not appear whether their expectations are from an attempt to be made on the King's person, or from commotions that are to be raised either in Scotland, or other parts of the King's dominions. The Scotch disappointment,* and the ill-blood that may breed, looks like an encouragement to them; but the Lords Justices here think it an occasion to shew their care for his Majesty's preservation. These advices, uncertain as they are, they have ordered to be sent by express into Holland; and that the messengers be dispatched both ways, as well by Margate as Harwich, and the guards that be for the King on the road are to be doubled: there are to be likewise orders sent to Dover and Harwich, to take up and secure all Irish and others that come over, contrary to the Act of Parliament. Perhaps from these multiplied orders, we shall have a great noise of a new plot. It would not be amiss if we had one defeated and well proved. But they don't know what to make of this in Ireland themselves, as yet.

We take it for granted the King came to the

* In regard to Darien.

Hague on Saturday last, where they say he may depart in three or four days. If the wind, therefore, continue as it is, we shall expect to hear of his landing by Sunday or Monday next.

I find Sir Thomas Littleton wavering again, as to taking out his patent. I thought it had proceeded from his own and his lady's apprehensions, that they should be for ever involved in accounts; but he has hinted to me lately, as if he were advised not to trust to after determinations. If that be so, I cannot tell what will be the end of it.*

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October, either 15 or 16, 1699.

I have seen Mr. Harley this morning, who will come to your Grace at four this afternoon. He expresses great respect for you, is very much concerned at your indisposition, and thinks it more particularly unfortunate at this time, when there is an opportunity for your doing a great deal of good; I hope he will explain to your Grace in what manner he means it. He talked to me only in general of

* Almost immediately after receiving this letter, Shrewsbury came to London. During the whole year he appears to have been labouring to discover the means of forming for the King a solid administration, of which Sunderland should be a member. He had visited that statesman at Althorpe, and Sunderland placed himself entirely in Shrewsbury's hands. It would seem from a passage in the letters that follow, that the Duke now contemplated a coalition between the more moderate men of both parties, and that his first attempt was upon Harley.

favourable dispositions in people, and such an opportunity would leave us like people in a fog, who should with great difficulty get out of it. I could not in decency stay long with him, it being the first visit, and I took him out of bed in his night-gown.

Since your Grace has such an opinion of staying here as you were pleased to mention yesterday, I hope you will put yourself at more ease by going immediately wherever you like best, since the King rather wishes you should go abroad than retire into Oxfordshire. I suppose it is indifferent to your Grace, if it be not more preferable to go directly where you may have the speediest and most effectual remedy; all other considerations, for aught I see, are but trivial in themselves, and were they of more weight, they ought to give way to the necessary care of health and self-preservation. I can't but think the King will comply with whatever you should think fit for you to do. I believe, whatever dislike you have to your employment,* you would not judge this a proper conjuncture to resign it; and if, when you recover your health, think fit to hold it, I hope it will not have so many inconveniences in it as you now apprehend.

* Shrewsbury had accepted, though unwillingly, the office of chamberlain. N. B. I believe that the date of this letter is inaccurate. It was evidently dated from memory, and Shrewsbury's appointment was not announced till the 25th of October.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Nov. 23, 1699.

I hope your Grace will get well into the country, and find the benefit of that air. The King has appointed a meeting this evening of the Parliament Members, who are to attend him after the Council. Since it will be late before I get from Kensington, I write before I go thither to acquaint your Grace that I have seen Smith's book* in manuscript. He sent it last night to my lord Jersey, with a letter to let him know how ill he had been used, and that he should be obliged to print that book for his vindication, unless his Majesty should command him to the contrary. My Lord Jersey carried the book last night to the King, and told me of it this morning; and when I went into the King, he gave me the book to read, and asked me what was to be done upon it. My Lord Jersey had told me before, that the King's opinion was that it ought to be despised, and any endeavours to suppress it would only make the fellow more impertinent; and I easily gave into that notion, and the rather, since all the book contains is your Grace's letter to the House of Lords, with his own comment upon it, which seems to me to be of his own framing; to this he has added an account of his being sent abroad by Jack Arnold,

* Smith, the informer, again attacked Lord Shrewsbury at this time. His book was brought before the House of Peers, where he was condemned for a breach of privilege, his book pronounced a foul libel, and he himself confined in the gate-house.

but does not name him; and this he would have thought a very serious design; and he concludes with a list of those who have had licences to come into England, though they served in France during the war. He puts down some of the most noted names, as my Lord Bellew, &c. But he says in the book, when printed, will be 120 names of such as have had licences; and if there be 200 more, I shall not be afraid to see them, nor any thing else this fellow can publish.

He makes his dedication to the King, and the whole will be but a small pamphlet.

The King asked me, as my Lord Jersey did, whether it should not be sent to you, and Smith to have his answer when it was returned again; but I saw no reason for the delay, which would only have filled this man with vanity, if he imagined it was taken into consideration whether his mouth should be stopped. I was for delivering him his book immediately; and that my Lord Jersey should tell him, if thought fit, that threatening people to libel them in print, was not a way to recommend him. The King seems clear in the matter that the book should be returned him, and accordingly he put it into my Lord Jersey's hands this evening, which I hope your Grace will approve of. If this be the bomb that is to be thrown, it will go off like a *pop-gun.*

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Whitehall, Nov. 28, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 25th. My Lord Jersey gave Smith his book on Friday last, and told him the King did not know what he meant by it; and, as from himself, he told him that he thought threatening people was no way to recommend himself by. Last night his Lordship sent me one of his books printed, which I have had a little more time to peruse, and believe my Lord Peterborough* has a greater hand in it than I thought at first; and I am persuaded all his applications of late have been by his directions; that if he were to be taken notice of, he might make his own use of it. I perceive he has altered his dedication, and makes it to both Houses of Parliament, as well as to the King. I suppose the next step will be the presenting it to each member; and perhaps he will write to the Speaker, as he did before; whatever is intended, we shall now see within a few days.

Your Grace will see by the inclosed votes what were the resolutions of yesterday, and you will judge what they are looking after. They seemed to be in a calm temper, at least put on the show of it. I know not what they will do when their committees make their reports; but I think my Lord Chancellor

* As any record of this matter, regarding Smith, is uninteresting, except inasmuch as it developes the character of this remarkable nobleman, I shall omit any thing farther respecting the informer, where Lord Peterborough is not named.

will not be hurt by them. Mr. Montague happened to say, that he would guess what they aimed at. It was one whose virtue had raised him so much envy; but they would find that what he had a hand in was ordered by his Majesty in Council; but Sir Edward Seymour answered, that was what they had most reason to complain of. I suppose the meaning of it is, that the King is not permitted to be advised but on one side: perhaps the conclusion will be, to have a larger bottom, and to make people more easy one to another.

The resolutions were reported this day, and agreed to; the first are to be put into an address presented by the House to his Majesty; the inquiries about charters and commissioners of the peace are referred to several committees. Sir Richard Cox bethought himself of a speech against this day, and declaimed against bribery, which was to set himself loose against Sir Arthur Trevor, whom he has threatened since his first coming to Parliament. All he concluded with was, that his commission should be ordered to be brought thither, and then they might consider what to do with him. Nobody seconded him, so that thunderbolt is over. But my Lord Cheyney rose up, and made the motion for a supply, which nobody opposed, and it is resolved to go into a committee on Thursday. These gentlemen now take the lead, and we must see how far they will carry us.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Nov. 30, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 27th, and have sent the inclosed to my Lord Albermarle. If that were his business, to dispose of places in your gift, I suppose you will hear no more of it.

There was a meeting yesterday of twelve or fourteen parliament men at my Lord Chancellor's: they only discoursed in general about what had passed, and about the inquiries that are to be made into the charters and commissions of peace.* I think it was rather to shew we should stand by one another, though there was nothing said of it. I, sitting by my Lord Chancellor, told him of Smith's book, and what was the design of it. He thought the House of Lords would take notice of the printing a letter that was sent to them; its being superscribed to my Lord Chancellor does not make a difference; it was by their order he writ to your Grace, and you desire your answer may be communicated to their Lordships, and it is accordingly entered in their journals. We shall see what they or any body else will do when the book is out.

Fisher came to me last night, to tell me the book was to be published to-day. I asked him how he

* Perhaps there can hardly be found a more instructive as well as extraordinary picture of political apathy and degradation in the whole range of history, than is afforded by these letters at this period.

knew it; he said he had it from *old Chamberlain, the man-midwife, who has all along managed this matter under Lord Peterborough, and tells Fisher it is he that has maintained* ——* *all along.* I think they are all a parcel of rogues, that have it in their heads if they cannot terrify people they shall get nothing. I hope now to see an end of it, once for all; or, if it prove otherwise, let villainy ride triumphant, and honesty truckle to it.

I write this in the morning, because I shall have some members to dine with me; and, after that, I must go to the Council.

Sir Rowland Gwynn was yesterday at the meeting at my Lord Chancellor's; so I think he is weaned from his old gang.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 2, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 29th. It is now plain that my Lord Chancellor is aimed at, with a great deal of bitterness; and their displeasure against him is like to affect some others, who, perhaps, will be the less concerned at it, when they suffer in so good company, and for a fact that has so little guilt in it.

It was appointed yesterday to go into a committee of the whole House, to consider of Trade; none but

* A word wanting; undoubtedly Smith.

those that moved for it knew what was intended by it. It was imagined they would go upon lowering interest, especially in relation to the ——* of the Bank and New East India Company; or that they would open the trade with France as to wines, which some endeavoured at last year.

Mr. Moore began the debate with inveighing against high interest, and that trade could not flourish while so much money was to be laid out at eight per cent. He went next to the piracies, which increased so fast, that our ports in the West Indies were in danger to be shut up; and this let him in to discourse of Kidd,—that he plundered with a commission under the Broad Seal in his pocket, and was encouraged to it by those who were in partnership with him, and had obtained a grant of all he should steal.

Mr. Howe took it up, and asked what would become of this nation, if those in authority were not content to plunder and sweep away by grants all that could be got here, but likewise sent out their thieves to rifle whatever was to be met with elsewhere?

Sir Christopher Musgrave came into it, and said these seemed to be horrid things, and whoever were guilty of them, he should not be for sparing them, if the proofs amounted to what was represented.

It was ordered that Kidd's commission be laid before them; as also the grant to several persons of what he should take, and the indenture with the

* A word wanting.

treasury about the King's tenth part,* together with the representations that had been made, from time to time, by the East India Company, concerning Kidd, and other piracies, which are to be brought on Monday, the committee being then to sit again.

Nothing was said this day on the other side, it being reserved for the bringing in of the papers. I went accidentally this afternoon to wait on my Lord Chancellor, and found there my Lord Orford, Mr. Montague, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Boyle, who, I suppose, met by appointment; they talked over this matter, and gave their opinion what other papers should be in readiness, particularly as to my Lord Bellamont's behaviour in seizing Kidd and securing his effects, and what is to be said in defence of all concerned. My Lord Chancellor would have no delay in owning who they were that fitted out the ship, and what they paid towards it; which, no doubt, is prudent, since there is not one name, nor has one step been made, which is not known already. It is thought to happen well, that the inquiry is rather made this year than the last, since my Lord Bellamont's disinterested proceeding shews how fairly every thing was intended from the beginning.

Dr. Davenant's book is abroad, and publickly sold, but I hear more of Smith. It seems there is a new book come out in justification of the Scots' Settlement at Darien, and upbraiding the govern-

* The King's tenth part of the prize-money obtained by Kidd, when sent out to suppress the pirates, was reserved as in regard to ships of war; the rest was granted to the subscribers, &c.

ment for abandoning them. Sir Edward Seymour told me to-day he had one of them, and pretends to know the author. He says I am mauled in it for the part I acted, and particularly for the insulting joy I shewed at their leaving the place, and that I ran with the news to the Spanish Ambassador. That, I assured him, was not true ; for I had never seen the Spanish Ambassador since I was secretary, till the time I carried him the message to leave the kingdom ; and I nowhere else shewed more joy than came to my share as an Englishman, and I thought we all looked upon it as a thorn drawn out of our sides, which he did not much disown ; but, however, said the book was well writ, and what more is to be made of it, I don't know.

I think, upon the whole, let these inquiries go as they will, that my Lord Chancellor may come to what your Grace once said, that you would have nothing to do with employments, if they exposed you to be teased and baited in parliament, though I wish you both more resolution.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 5, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 2d, and am sorry for so many ills you have upon you at once ; but if you can bear them, I hope you will be less concerned at our extravagancies here, which

I hope will all blow over, though nobody can answer for popular breath.

As I sat yesterday by Sir Edward Seymour, one was asking me how your Grace did. When I told him how you were, I asked Sir Edward whether I should write you word that he had a remedy for you, that should cure you of all diseases? "No," said he, "the Duke of Shrewsbury has been kind to me, and he shall find me his friend," and he bid me tell you so. This was said while the House was in their angry debate upon the papers Mr. Lownds brought in, which were Kidd's commission, with your Grace's warrant for affixing the seal, as also the grant to Lord Bellamont, and others, of what Kidd should take, and the indenture with the King about the tenths. I likewise brought some papers, which were the order for seizing Kidd and his effects as soon as the notice came of his turning pirate, and the account of what my Lord Bellamont had done in pursuance of those orders, and also what directions had been given for bringing home Kidd, upon receiving the advice that he was secured. These papers were with difficulty received, since they had a mind to pass their censure only on the grant that was previous to all this. Mr. Howe endeavoured to make a warming speech, and concluded with a motion, that the grant should be declared illegal; which Mr. Harley put more into form, that the grant was illegal and prejudicial to the trade of the kingdom; which Musgrave and Seymour spoke to;—but Mr. Montague, Mr. Smith, Mr. Boyle, and Mr. Cowper,

with others, opposed it, saying they could not be ripe for any question till they had looked through all the papers, and seen the whole state of the facts, the end as well as the beginning; and when the other side saw there was no withstanding it, they gave way, without a division, that the papers should be referred to a committee of the whole House, and the committee is to meet on Wednesday. Some moved that the persons named in the grant should be sent for, to know whether they were trustees or not; but were told it was unnecessary, for the persons concerned would own their names, which will be done to-morrow. If they could, they would lay the sole blame of the grant on my Lord Chancellor; and by yesterday's disappointment I hope it is more than they can do, but they will drive it furiously. I send your Grace his Majesty's answer to the address which was presented yesterday. The business of this day has been to vote a loan of 220,000*l.* to pay off seamen, to which is to be added 80,000*l.*, arising out of the surplus of the Customs.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 7, 1699.

* * * * * * *†

The consideration thereof was put off till this morning, because they had then appointed to go upon the Bishop of St. David's privilege, which

† The first page, referring to nothing but the presentation of Smith's book to the House of Peers, I have omitted.

some Lords espoused too warmly, and Lord Peterborough, among the rest, intending to put a slur upon the Archbishop's authority; but in the conclusion it was declared the Bishop had no privilege against the Archbishop's judicature.*

This morning the Lords took Smith's book into consideration, and have ordered that he be taken into custody, as also the printer and publisher of it. I have not heard the manner it was done in, but they were not long about it. My Lord Jersey told me my Lord Peterborough was present, and he moved to know whether the printed letter agreed with what was entered in the journal, and he said there was some little difference, by leaving out a few words; but it is not doubted this was the contrivance of him that made the objection, and all that is in the book is every where believed to be by the same hand. He has affected very much of late to be whispering with my Lord Jersey, who says Lord Peterborough told him this morning, he wondered what Smith meant by publishing this book; that if he had had any hand in advising him, he should have gone another way to work. This is after the rate he talked to me in the summer, when he seemed to disapprove of the printing the letters, and said, if he did any thing, it

* One of the most important decisions of the House of Peers. The Bishop, it must be remarked, first waived the privilege of his peerage, and then, when sentence of degradation had been pronounced by his ecclesiastical judges, he claimed his privilege; the Lords, however, denied it. Being no longer a Bishop he was no longer a Peer. Vernon puts the case above much more strongly in regard to the authority of the Archbishop.

should be a bomb; but now it is thrown I think it is very ineffectual, and only makes his own malice remarkable.

There has been no attempt made to bring this into the House of Commons, and I think there is no disposition there to meddle with it. Your Grace already knows how some were bent against my Lord Chancellor, but that design is now disappointed.

We were yesterday in the Committee of Trade, to which the papers about Kidd were referred; as soon as the commission, grant, and indenture had been read, Sir Bartlemy Shore rises up to inveigh against the grant, saying that all the other papers, which treated of matters subsequent to it, could not mend it, if it were in itself illegal; which he undertook to prove by several arguments. The chief were, that the pirates were named whose goods were granted away, which, he said, was contrary to an Act of Parliament, which forbids giving away felons' goods till after the conviction, and that the restrictive words in the grant, which says those goods were granted as far as the King could do it, and they were grantable, shewed only that those who took that grant knew they were upon an unlawful thing, and therefore put a colour upon it by these words, for the pirates' goods are the King's, and he may grant them after conviction; yet the goods taken by pirates, the King is only a trustee for, and no man loses his property in them; but, upon making out his claim, they ought to be restored to him. He

concluded with a question they had concerted, that the letters patent granted to the Earl of Bellamont and others, of pirates' goods, are dishonourable to the King, against the law of nations, contrary to the laws and statutes of this realm, invasive of property, and destructive of trade and commerce.

Mr. Montague was willing, for the saving of time, to give up the point of reading all the papers; but, as it was agreed, I gave the House an account of all the steps made from Livingston's introducing Kidd to my Lord Bellamont, to do a considerable service against the pirates, to the time of Kidd's being seized in New England; which, I am told, gave satisfaction to many who did not understand the case. And as it was before approved of by my Lord Chancellor, I named the lords who were concerned in the grant, and made use of their servants and dependants as trustees; which proved likewise of use, that people might know who they were passing sentence upon, which otherwise they would have pretended to be ignorant of; and it was but too visible that was their meaning, though those who were resolved to drive the point said the naming of great men was never any ——* to that House, who would censure miscarriages wherever they were found. Mr. Cowper answered to it, that as nobody ought to be influenced by great names, so neither should there be any envy or prosecution against men because they were great; the flattering or the maligning of them being equally

* Word wanting.

base; and they, as well as all other people, ought to have their actions weighed in equal balances. He spoke, likewise, very well to the legality of the patent, and said that pirates' goods came under three considerations:—First, goods that properly belonged to them. Second, the ship in which piracy was committed, and both these the King was entitled to immediately by the piracy, let the ship belong to whom it would before;—and the third, was goods robbed by pirates, which it was owned belonging to the proprietor when he should make out his claim to them; but, in the meantime, the King had a possessor's right to those goods, and might lodge it when he thought fit, and therefore the patent had taken in all cases in those general words, as far as the goods were grantable. Mr. Solicitor and Mr. Dormer, of Buckinghamshire, argued, both of them, very strongly, for the legality of the grant, and answered all objections against it, particularly the statute against granting felon's goods before conviction, did not relate to grants, which are under a different judicature, and before that statute felon's goods could be granted before conviction. Mr. Solicitor shewed that pirates' goods have been granted to every Lord Admiral for these two or three hundred years, and it was reasonable it should be so, that they might have an interest in suppressing them; and, in the present Commission of Admiralty, the King reserves the disposal of those goods to himself. Besides, there was nothing so common as the

grant of felons' goods, which almost every lord of a manor enjoys; and the questioning such grants would be a great shaking of property.

The debate lasted from noon till nine at night, and every body had a share in it that uses to speak, both good and bad; and the decision of it was, that 133 were for the question, and 189 against it; so it was thrown out, and a majority of 56 is thought no small matter as this House is constituted. I believe a good many of their side slipt away, and would not stand a question which, upon the arguments, appeared so doubtful whether they should carry it; and some were offended at the heap of enormities that were charged upon the grant, which perhaps would have come up to a gentle censure. But I believe the contrivers of the question thought themselves sure of their number, and therefore laid the charge the heavier, in order to remove my Lord Chancellor, by an address which was the least they promised themselves; but the two houses being juster than to be led blindly by other men's passions, I hope those who are thought useful to the public, and whose countenance in their employments is so solemnly contended for, will be prevailed with to abandon them.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 4th, and hope this account will put you more at ease, as to our cavillings.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 9, 1699.

There was little done yesterday in the House, and to-day the state of the Prince of Denmark's debt were ordered to be presented. I send your Grace a copy of it, it having gone through my hands. I find my Lord Marlborough has bestirred himself, though some of the leading men were not to be prevailed with. When the regular motion was made for referring this paper to the committee appointed to consider of supplies, Sir Christopher Musgrave opposed it, and moved for a day to be appointed to consider of this matter, which he said was of an extraordinary nature, and if they gave way to it, they might have an innumerable number of unknown debts, brought upon them: besides, he had heard of a Privy Seal that was already issued for the Prince's security. Sir Edward Seymour carried it further, and said if this debt were to be paid here, it ought to be done without charging the people, for they had given 100,000*l.* extraordinary, to the Civil List, viz: 50,000*l.* to the late Queen; 30,000*l.* to the Duke of Gloucester; and 20,000*l.* for he knew not what use; out of which, 15,000*l.* only had been paid to the Duke of Gloucester, and the remainder might be applied to the Prince's debt; but Sir Bartlemey Shore and Mr. Hammond spoke roundly for it, and joined with those who were for referring it to the Committee of Supplies. Mr. Howe was more compli-

mental both to the King and Prince than ever I heard him; but more especially to the latter. He would have the Prince paid, if not as a debt, at least, that he should have the same sum as a present; but, however, he disliked referring it to the Committee of Supplies, and joined with those who would have another day appointed to consider, and that it should be done in the House: and this, he said, would be more honourable for the Prince, and secure them for the future, from the like precedents. Mr. Harley was of the same opinion. Perhaps the question might have been carried for referring it to a committee, but not to provoke those who shewed an inclination to do the thing, provided they were not opposed in the manner that question was waived: and, by consent, the House goes into consideration of this debt on Tuesday next.

Mr. Montague made a greater slip to-day than I ever yet saw him guilty of. When they asked how it came to pass that they never heard of this debt before, and that a general list of the debt should be brought in, and this omitted, Mr. Montague unluckily replied, that it partly proceeded from a coldness and misunderstanding that was for some time between the two courts. He had no sooner said it, but I observed Sir Christopher Musgrave took notice of it to those who sat near him, and soon after brought it into a speech, that he wondered to hear such a reason given. If there had been a misunderstanding between the two courts, he was very sorry for it,

but would not believe it went so far that the Prince would not have justice done him. I believe Mr. Montague was sensible he had overshot himself, but yet he did not go about to explain it. The King went yesterday to Hampton Court, and returns this evening.

The House of Lords have not sat these two days, being adjourned till Monday.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 12, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 9th, and shall make your compliment to Sir Edward Seymour, as soon as I have an opportunity. I don't think there will be any obligation upon you to come up sooner than your health will permit, or you have a mind to. Lord Peterborough, I suppose, has spent his fire in Smith's matter, and I do not find his train will take. Smith sent a letter to my Lord Chancellor on Sunday, to acquaint him he would surrender himself next day. Accordingly he applied yesterday at the bar of the Lords, and told them he came to them as a court of justice; that, when he was examined before, it was one. By the by, I hear Lord Peterborough behaved himself like one that raved; he would have Smith's book read, after he had owned before, any censure should be put upon it; and while it was reading, in a careless manner,

he fell a talking all the while with my Lord Chancellor, and then would have it read again, because he had not minded it; but the Lords were not for humouring his frenzies, and their resolution was, that Smith should be re-committed for a breach of privilege in printing their proceedings. Lord Peterborough inveighed against his first order for commitment, though he had seconded the motion, there being no proof that he had published the book till he came to the bar and owned it; and I hear some Lords were not satisfied that it was very regular. There was something said about his being prosecuted for defamation; but some had doubts on that matter, whether the House should order it, since it did not appear precedented, but any peer that was injured was to take his own remedy. By what I can understand, he will lie in custody until he acknowledges his fault, and petitions to be discharged; and so I suppose the matter will end.

We have had the Prince of Denmark's business up again to-day, and it is at last referred to the Committee of Supplies, without a division, but not without many negatives. I am afraid it will go but awkwardly at last. They have ordered the treaty of Altona to be laid before them, as also the Privy Seal that has been given to the Prince. They will pay no more than their proportion of their debt, and perhaps that is not unreasonable; but they talk of addressing to the King, that he will procure the payment of the rest from the States, and other princes

whom it may equally concern. Mr. Howe would not consider it as a debt due from them; but, however, he would requite the Prince's generosity in delivering up his patrimony, by a present in land of equal value. For aught I know, that may be in Irish lands, and that they will take the Duke of York's estate from my Lady Orkney, and give it to the Prince and Princess. You may imagine how disgustful that will be to the King; but the Commission have put these lands into their report, which will soon be presented to the House. We heard yesterday that they were landed at Chester. Lord Drogheda, Sir Francis Brewster, and Sir Richard Leving, who have not agreed with the others in their report, have writ an account of it to the Speakers of both Houses. Sir Thomas Littleton acquainted the House with it to-day, and offered the letter to be read; but Sir Edward Seymour opposed it, saying they ought not to suffer the commission to be arraigned by the lesser number, even before they appeared to deliver their report: so the Speaker is to keep it for another occasion. My Lord Chancellor has the like letter, and, I believe, will acquaint the Lords with it to-morrow; for they have not sat to-day.

In the debate about the Prince's debt, Sir John Rolles fell upon the Bishop of Salisbury, as unfit to be about the Duke of Gloucester on account of his country, and his pastoral letter, that would have made us a conquered people.

Sir John Packington came into it with a set speech, as if it had been concerted; and though the Speaker would have stopped these reflections, yet the House had a mind to be merry with them, and would have them go on. I don't know, but they may do it more seriously another day, since Sir Edward Seymour and Mr. Howe gave some little touches, too. They talk of addressing to the King, for removing him from his preceptorship.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Dec. 14, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 11th, and shall make your Grace's compliments to the Lords you mentioned. I did it yesterday to Sir Edward Seymour, who seemed to take it very well, though I met him when he was out of humour, upon losing a question he had engaged in; for they made a small attack that day upon the Bishop of Salisbury, which, I suppose, they had concerted over-night, and thought themselves secure of carrying it, from the great number of such as laughed on their side the night before, when Rolles and Packington broke through the matter then in question to fly at the Bishop. But they have misreckoned again; and it was very fit they should do so, since the chief thing they had to charge the Bishop was, his being the author of a book that was ordered to be burnt for

the positions maintained in it, that the King came by conquest. There were other things said, about his being a Scotchman, and the giving him a preference was a reflection on the learning and abilities of the English. They quickly ——* up (as the present manner is,) to a question, viz., That an humble address be made to his Majesty for removing Gilbert, Lord Bishop of Sarum, from being preceptor to his Highness the Duke of Gloucester; but it was more rigorously opposed than they presumed it would have been, and a good deal of right was done to the Bishop; and that what he had writ in defence of the Protestant religion, and English liberty, was more than a sufficient atonement for any slip he might make amongst so many volumes he had writ,—and the turning him out for being a Scotchman, would not be the way to bring that nation out of the heats they were already in. Those who were for saving the Bishop would have been content the question should have dropt; but others would have it put, and would likewise divide upon it, which only turned so much more to the Bishop's honour, since the question was carried in the negative by 173 against 133. That the Bishop should carry it by a majority of forty, was rather more remarkable than a greater number in my Lord Chancellor's case, since this was brought on by surprise. My Lord Marlborough shewed a great concern for the Bishop, suspecting at one time or another to be brought on.

* Something wanting.

It seemed, therefore, very strange to me that his brother, George Churchill, should slip away into the Speaker's chamber, and not give his vote. I have since heard it said, that if this question had been carried it would not have stopped there, but a farther reform would have been made in the Duke of Gloucester's family; and that the governor might have been found fault with, in order to have made room for my Lord Rochester, who, they say, would have been well enough pleased with the employment.

I don't know they did any thing yesterday in the House of Lords, except reading the letter my Lord Chancellor acquainted them he had received from three of the Irish Commissioners. They entered into no debate upon it, and have deferred the consideration of it till the rest of the Commissioners shall bring their reports. I suppose they are come to town by this time. Mr. Methuen arrived here on Tuesday last, and was yesterday with the King. My Lord Jersey is passing a grant, at this instant, of the reversion of some of the Queen Dowager's lands. I wish he has not taken an unseasonable time for it; but he has a notion that the restraint layed by the Civil List, upon granting away any part of the revenue, does not take place till after Christmas. It will be well, if they allow him to put his own interpretation upon it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 18, 1699.*

We have been in a Committee of Supply to-day, when the fleet and good husbandry was talked of. I suppose they will come up to 10,000 seamen; but, in the meantime, they have only ordered that the Admiralty lay before them the retrenchments they have proposed to be made, pursuant to the King's direction; as well in the ordinary of the navy, as in relation to the pay, and half-pay, of the sea officers.

Mr. Montague, and some other of your friends, desired me to acquaint your Grace, that as soon as you are in a condition for a journey, they think it would be for your Grace's service to come up and appear in the House of Lords, for the silencing of what malicious people would infer from your absence. Whatever delicacy you might have on that account, the impertinent occasion is now over; and whatever they may have to ask Mr. Arnold, they can have nothing to say to you on that score. If you have thoughts of coming up, there will be no occasion for it till the beginning of January, for I believe the House of Commons will adjourn on Tuesday next till the day after new year's-day; and, perhaps, the Lords may not meet so soon.

I ought to mention that my Lord Wharton came to town on Thursday, and began the debate yester-

* The first part of this letter, referring only to Smith, the informer, is omitted.

day, and took care of it throughout. My Lord Sunderland will be here on Thursday next. Mr. Neale, the groom porter, lies adying. His Majesty gave me a petition yesterday, presented by his son, that he may succeed as groom porter, or in the Transfer Office. The King heard a very indifferent character of the young man, and has no inclination to gratify him in either. I told him I thought the groom porter's place was in your Grace's disposal; whether it be or not, I believe the King will give it to whom you shall propose. I know not whether your Grace may think Mr. Rowley fit for it, and in that case it would bring him some consolation for the loss of his son. I will inquire who this Garret is, that is mentioned in the petition as a good patentee and whether he be living.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 19, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 16th, and am glad to hear you have thoughts of coming to town. I suppose you do not intend it before the next week, and then you will find the King at Hampton Court, whither he goes the day after Christmas-day. I hope your Grace will have no return of spitting of blood, but I, least of all, would not have it prevent your appearing in the House of Lords when they meet after the holidays,

and therefore I think the later you come to town, the less danger there will be of a relapse. Smith has been before the Lords to-day, and brought some letters he received from Arnold, during the time he was abroad. I don't yet hear what sort of correspondence they carried on together, but the Lords have given no directions for Mr. Arnold's attending them. I just saw my Lord Marlborough yesterday, who told me that business was now over, though my Lord Normanby said their letting fall the debate about sending for Arnold, would not hinder their taking it up again when they thought fit. They had it under consideration to-day what they should do with Smith, whether to discharge him or not; and a committee is appointed to search precedents what they have done towards the persons whom they have censured in this manner. I don't think any thing of a prosecution will be urged by your Grace's friends, if the forms of the House do not require it.

My Lord Marlborough goes out of town to-morrow, to expect my Lord Sunderland next day at St. Alban's, and intends to stay there all the holidays.

My Lord Wharton went out of town on Saturday last. Mr. Stanhope has the offer of going into Holland, if he has a mind to it. I have given him an account of it by a letter sent to Paris, but we hear nothing of his arrival there; the last news we had of him was that he was seized with a fit of the gout at Bordeaux. If he is willing to go to Holland,

I suppose his stay will not be long there, but he will return to his post in Spain, when an accommodation is made between us and Spain, which the Emperor is to mediate. Though I mentioned Mr. Stanhope's being provided for in Holland when the Spanish Ambassador was sent away, and it was suspected the like might happen to Mr. Stanhope, I made no new instances about it, and the King, of his own accord, when Lord Jersey read Mr. Stanhope's letter to him, resolved he should have the offer of going to Holland; which I can't but think is right, though it be some short disappointment to Sir John Stanley.

They tell me Mr. Garret, mentioned in young Neale's petition, is his uncle, by the mother's side, and that he is still living, and is of a trade in the city, and that he is in trust for this Neale; but I think if neither the patentee nor the trustee be capable of executing the office, it will concern my Lord Chancellor to commit the execution of the place to proper hands, however the others may be entitled to the patent fee. Poor Onslow's election was determined yesterday, as burgess of Guildford. However his cause had been decried before it was heard, yet he carried it by the greatest majority that has been in any division yet, he having 185 against 109; yet all the grandees of the other side divided against him. I hope it will make his brother, Sir Richard, less fond of going with them another time.

One may observe what a strength there is like to be in the Whig party, if they do not moulder again

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by being put upon unpopular things. If they cannot do every thing that the King may think a gratification to him, yet I believe he may depend upon it they will keep the government upon its present basis, which is no small consideration; but then they must be at liberty not to meddle with things they see reason to despair of; and, as circumstances now stand, no prudent man will act but with a good deal of caution, and have some regard to his own safety, since the compensations are like to be so small, for any hazards he shall run.

Since I begun this letter I have been at Kensington. I find his Majesty intends one of Neale's places for Sir John Stanley, either the Transfer Office or the master porter of the Mint. Nothing will be done about the groom porter till your arrival. I now hear the patentee is Sir John Garret, a member of the House of Commons.

I hear the Lords have committed Smith to the gate-house, it being according to precedent in a like case. I suppose, upon a submissive petition, he will be discharged.

We were in a Committee of Supply to-day; the papers brought by the Admiralty being read, Sir George Rooke moved for 10,000 men to be employed this year at sea, but nothing was resolved on, and I doubt whether they will amount to 520,000*l.*, which, with the money borrowed to pay off the seamen's wages and the Ordinary of the Navy, and what they design for repairs of ships, will rise to above a million.

So, out of the three-pence per pound, if they would go so high, there will not be enough left to maintain the land forces; and those, I perceive, will not easily be submitted to, there being a great grudge against the horse and dragoons, whereby the garrisons are left with fewer men than guns.

They have a mind to set another peevish inquiry on foot, and therefore have ordered the Admiralty to lay before them what orders have been given to four small ships that are sent to the West Indies. One is the Rupert prize, that Long, the quaker, is gone in. Your Grace remembers something of him; but I intend Sir James Houblon shall answer for him, who is concerned in the wreck he is to look after. I think the inquiry is rather after another ship, viz., the Dolphin, Captain Hunter commander; he is to look for the wreck granted to the Duke of Schomberg, from ten to forty degrees. My Lord Macclesfield, and Travers, of our house, have appeared principally in this project. I suppose they believe my Lord Orford interested in it. If he be, it is more than I know; but I remember he brought a memorandum of it one night to the Cabinet Council; and, accordingly, I was to signify the King's pleasure to the Admiralty Board, for sending away the ships on that expedition.

Another of the ships mentioned is that which Dampier* is gone in, to discover whether there be any isles lying between the Straits of Magellan in

* The famous navigator.

America, and the Cape of Good Hope in Africa. I suppose Mr. Montague recommended him for this purpose, and, no doubt, had a fair meaning in it. What the fourth ship is I don't yet know. I imagine that the hints of these matters came, originally, from some of the Admiralty or Navy, if not both.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 21, 1699.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 18th. * * * * * *† I have already acquainted your Grace, that I thought that we should adjourn to-morrow till Tuesday se'nnight. I hear the Lords do not intend to meet so soon, but will adjourn to the Friday following.

The House of Commons were yesterday in a Committee of Supply, and had the fleet under consideration. Sir George Rooke again proposed 10,000 men, but soon after Mr. Lowndes reduced it to 8,000, he discovering so soon that an abatement would be admitted; it made way for Mr. Harley's proposal, of having only 7,000 men for thirteen months, which is about 10,000 in the summer, and half the number in the winter, which was carried without a division, and, perhaps, would hardly have been so, if the committee had divided; but I think the King was inclinable that the sea service

† Part omitted, regarding Smith.

should not exceed 900,000*l.* this year, which this number of men would bring it to, considering what they have already advanced for the arrears of wages, and that 80,000*l.* is to be applied to the repairs of ships. It will be still necessary to give three-pence in the pound, if they will keep up the guards and garrisons; and there will be a great contest whether it shall be according to the present establishment.

This resolution has been confirmed to-day, without opposition. What we have done further, is to order that Simon Harcourt, clerk of the peace, be taken into custody for a breach of privilege, in assaulting Sir John Phillips, whom he met with yesterday in Westminster Hall, as he came from the house; and besides giving him very abusive language, he challenged him, and struck him with his cane. It seems Harcourt married the widow of Sir John Phillips' elder brother, and they have law suits about the estate. Sir John made it appear how much right he had on his side, even in the law matters; so I think something exemplary will be done to Harcourt.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 23, 1699.

The House of Commons adjourned yesterday till Thursday se'nnight, and have appointed the call of the House the same day. By their taking care to have a full appearance at their first meeting, I know

not whether they have not something else in prospect, besides carrying on the Irish Bill, which will be ready by that time. They talk as if they would renew their attack upon particular persons, viz., my Lord Orford, in taking a share of what the Dolphin frigate should fish out of wrecks in the West Indies; as also upon the Lord Chancellor, for the Windsor lands; Mr. Smith, for begging the reversions of the Welsh estate, that was given the King by Sir John Williams's will; and my Lord Jersey, for passing a grant at this time;—but as to this last, he himself has stopped the grant, and taken back the bill from the Privy Seal, though Mr. Lowndes had put it into the list that lies before the House.

Some were for adjourning till Monday fortnight, and divided upon it. The same persons would have been willing the House should have two or three days before the call, but the majority were for equal usage, that we might all work, or all keep holiday.

The Lords' adjournment is only for a day more, till Friday se'nnight. I don't hear that Smith has petitioned, so that he must lie till they meet again. My Lord Sunderland came to town on Thursday, and was yesterday at the King's levee, and has had no other audience since; but my Lord Albermarle has been with him, to tell him the King would speak with him on Sunday. I suppose this time is allowed for his talking with other people. I saw him yesterday in the evening, but company soon came in; He talks to every body as if his intentions were to

return into the country, as soon as my Lord Spencer's marriage is over. When I went away, he desired I would acquaint you with his arrival, and excuse his not doing it himself; if you came to Hampton Court he would not fail of seeing you there, or otherwise he would stay for your coming to Kensington. The King bid me tell your Grace, that he should go to Hampton Court on Tuesday next, and stay there a week; and when you are in a condition for a journey, he should be glad to see you.

Sir James Forbes tells me he has endeavoured to make a reconciliation between my Lord Sunderland and my Lord Orford. I perceive my Lady Sunderland had laid the foundation for it, by her letters to my Lady Orford; and if my Lord Orford were not already disposed towards it, I think Sir James would not be so forward in offering his mediatorial offices. Mr. Montague made a visit yesterday to my Lord Sunderland.

Sir John Stanley kissed the King's hand this morning, for the Wardenship of the Mint. He still keeps his place in the Stamp Office.

Your Grace's letter of the 20th has been brought me this evening. I will acquaint his Majesty tomorrow at what time you intend to be at Hampton Court. You will not expect to see the King that day, it being the day the Queen died; which he has been hitherto very strict in observing.

I don't apprehend the business of Long* will

* The quaker.

reflect upon any body. At least, I have most to answer for, who writ to the Admiralty in his behalf, and prepared his instructions when that matter was mentioned. I intend to call upon Sir James Houblon, to give an account of his having vouched for his honesty. I think they would not have meddled with these inquiries, but with an eye to my Lord Orford, though in general they will condemn the putting the nation to a charge in fitting out a ship only for projects, and private men's profit; which, perhaps, is not very justifiable.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 3, 1699-1700.
Wednesday, 2 o'clock.

I am extremely concerned that your Grace should fall into a relapse, and that there should be other causes for it, besides the town air. It would be very well, if the King could have your service, and you your health; but if they can't subsist together, I wish you may enjoy your health at a distance from business, which ought not to be imposed upon any that want health. I suppose, however, that your Grace will try a little longer, and that I may have the honour to wait on your Grace at Kensington.

I know not whether Dr. Kingston has sent you one of his pieces. For my own part, I knew nothing of his writing it;—if I had been consulted, I would not have advised his coming into a print. About

three weeks, or a month ago, when some of the Lords of the Cabinet Council met to examine O'Brian, who came from Flanders, Captain Baker brought Dr. Kingston to tell what he had heard of O'Brian; and, at the end of his evidence, he desired he might be heard a few words to another matter, and it was to give his character of Smith, repeating some of the passages in his book;—but when he was withdrawn, I was against making any use of him, as thinking it much the best way not to thrust oneself between plot-makers, who generally make more mischief than they mend; and, if he must be scribbling, I wish he had let it alone for some time longer.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 4, 1699-1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of this day. It is very mortifying to hear that your illness increases. As to the stopping Kingston's book, that is impossible with such scribbling fools, who imagine others will be as pleased with what they write, as they themselves are; and, therefore, publish it before they give any notice. At the same time he sent me his book he did it to several others; and it was at that time in the bookseller's hands, for common sale. If I could have known of it in time, perhaps he would have been willing enough to have

taken a piece of money for suppressing it, for he is very poor, and whatever he does is with a design to get something; but this has been a bad way to recommend himself. One knows not how to avoid many impertinences, that will fall out in human life; but one may, in a good measure, help being concerned at it: and it is a comfort that one has such a remedy within oneself which is more to be relied on than any thing the world affords. The King came this evening to the Council; but I believe he would have stayed longer at Hampton Court, if he could have foreseen that the House of Commons would have been adjourned again till Monday.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Whitehall, January 9, 1699-1700.

Your Grace will allow me to be a little surprised at the receipt of your letter yesterday; though, at the same time, I am very sorry you had so much occasion for altering your resolution of seeing the King, before you went one way or another. The King dined yesterday at Hampton Court, expecting to see you there, and intended to acquaint you with a scheme which he has thought on, which, he supposed, you would approve, since it is only to have your assistance and private advice upon occasion, without either engaging you in a load of business or in the ministry. I can only mention it in general,

because I don't know more particulars; but one thing he added, that if he should be obliged to go out of the kingdom this summer, he would excuse you from being one of the Lords Justices, by reason that you can't bear the town. If you have a mind to hear more of this matter, I believe I can be more fully instructed in it, though the King thinks it would have more prevalency if he had discoursed with you himself. He is pretty inclinable to imagine that by the orders sent by Mons. Auverquerque on Sunday, to have the King's horses and dogs in readiness, your Grace might have notice of his coming to Hampton Court, and therefore hastened away, to decline coming to an eclaircissement. The King did not make the observation as if he took it amiss, but rather to confirm him in the opinion he had taken up, ever since he had left Hampton Court, that you were bent upon retiring; and it is certain he would do what he could to dissuade you from doing it totally and finally.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Whitehall, January 11, 1699-1700.

I hope your Grace got well into the country, and that you begin to find the benefit of it.

It has been under consideration how to bring the last book about Darien into the House of Commons, to have it censured there, as so insolent and scurrilous a way of writing deserves. But I think it has

been too long neglected, and it has only given occasion and time to the Scotch agents and emissaries to defeat the design accordingly. My Lord Peterborough took notice of the book yesterday, in the House of Lords. The turn he gave to it was, that it was writ passionately, and in the language of persons that smarted under great losses; yet, they do throughout the book aim at what may properly relieve them, viz., their being admitted to an union with England;—and this he made his theme, shewing the convenience, and, in this conjuncture, the necessity of it, in regard to our present and future tranquillity; hinting at the competition for the Crown that may happen between two young Princes; and if one of them, as has been usual, would change his religion for a kingdom, it is not unlikely he would put himself under the education of the kirk; in which case, perhaps, they would prefer him to one bred up in episcopacy, though it were by a Scotch bishop.

My Lord Privy Seal can no sooner hear the word union named, but he runs blindfold into it, and said all he could think of, for pressing it. My Lord Halifax opposed it; and said they should run any risk rather than be bullied by the Scots' menaces. However, the gravest men, such as my Lord Rochester and Lord Godolphin, were for setting apart another day to consider the business of Darien, and have appointed it for Tuesday; but which way they will handle it, is yet uncertain.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Whitehall January 13, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 10th. It is some comfort that you are got home to the use of your own remedies, which, I hope, will not fail of their usual effect. I have not seen the King since; but I have sent him an account how you are, which he has been inquiring after.

Perhaps I may send for Dr. Kingston, and when I do I must give him something, he being very poor; but I think it best to defer it, at least, till I see what becomes of Smith,—he has not yet petitioned, and the Lords adjourned on Thursday, till Monday next. There may be a mystery in his affecting to lie in prison, which I don't yet understand; I hope I may, when his acquaintance comes to town. I don't know, but they may be preparing another book, in answer to Kingston; and, therefore, one must not be too forward to mix in their controversy.

The business of the fleet was made an end of yesterday in the committee. They would not come up to make any addition to the number of seamen. They would not so much as take the guard-ships into the ordinary of the Navy, which would have afforded 800 men more for the public. They have allowed only 18,000*l.* to half-pay for the sea officers, according to a scheme of the Admiralty when they were required to consider of retrenchments, which is for nine flags, fifty captains, and 100 lieutenants,

besides masters and surgeons. The Irish Bill was read to-day, and a second reading is ordered on Thursday next. It is directed that all members should attend that day. Those that moved it, I suppose, meant to muster up a force against the third, which I have no prospect of.

Sir John Levison moved for printing the Report of the Irish Commissioners, which held a debate of three or four hours. It was pretended that the bill being grounded upon it, it was fit people should be satisfied in it. Mr. Montague spoke smartly against it, that it was not fit to print so many reflections as they had heaped together without proofs. And many things were said to expose the Commissioners and their way of acting, which Mr. Methuen did very skilfully. Mr. Pulteney and my Lord Coningsby, particularly the former, were very pathetic in their expostulations not to be called criminals in print, upon false suggestions, which they were ready to clear themselves of; and appealed to the justice of the House, that they might be first heard. The great men kept themselves out of this debate; and when they found the temper of the House against it, they gave up the question, only they were for printing some other parts of the reports, viz., the book that contains the forfeitures, and another that contains the grants; but to this it was objected that they have not yet been read, and so they adjourned.

It was intended to-day, to make a complaint in the House against the last Scotch book. It was

resolved last night, at a meeting at my Lord Chancellor's, and Sir Rowland Gwynn was to open it; but other matters lasted till five o'clock. Whenever this complaint is made, I find it will be opposed. Mr. Harley, I find, has an odd notion that the parliament should not declare themselves one way or another, so as they may reserve themselves to be arbitrators, if occasion requires.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 16, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letters of the 13th and 15th, the former arriving yesterday. I had an opportunity to read it to his Majesty this morning, who seemed very well satisfied with the account you gave of your going away, though he does not think it needed an excuse. He wished you a speedy recovery, and will be sorry to hear what doubts you make of it. Upon this occasion I must not omit mentioning, that young Crofts, who broke a vein from a fall from his horse, and spit great quantities of blood, is now said to be perfectly recovered by Colbatche's remedies.

Mr. Walsh told me something of his Worcestershire petition, but has not yet brought it me. I will do what service in it I can; but I find he has already spoke to the Commissioners of Excise, who are under a difficulty in complying with what is desired.

I am glad your Grace approves of my deferring

to speak with Dr. Kingston; the reasons for it still continue, since I hear nothing of Smith's petitioning. I want my Coventry man, (who is every day expected), to understand the meaning of it.

I have sent your letter to my Lord Sunderland, who, I suppose, is now engaged in his son's wedding. We have had two busy days in the House of Commons. We sat yesterday till ten at night. We began with a complaint against the Scotch libel. Sir Rowland Gwynn, who introduced it, after having read the passages he found fault with, and before he brought the book to the table, moved that the address of the Lords and Commons might be read which was made when the Scotch company were endeavouring to get subscriptions here. Mr. Harley and others opposed the reading this address, as what might lead them to something that might be further provoking to Scotland; and they carried it by a division of 191 against 190; but after that the book was brought up and condemned to be burnt, and an address voted for a proclamation to be published, with a reward for the apprehending either the author or the printer.

In the debate about reading the address, both Sir Edward Seymour and Sir Christopher Musgrave expressed their dislike to an union, which Sir Edward compared to a countryman that had a wife proposed to him without a fortune, and gave this reason for refusing it, that if he married a beggar he should have a louse for a portion. This the Scotch have heard, and are very angry at it.

The next debate was upon a motion of Mr. Mompesson in behalf of the Irish Commissioners, who desired to be vindicated against the aspersions thrown upon them on Saturday; and Mr. Montague was called upon to name the author of what he said on Saturday, that a letter had been writ by a Member of the House, to direct the Commissioners to report the private estate, because their report would signify nothing without it, and that would reflect on the King more than any other grant. He excused himself as long as it was possible, till they were going to fix it upon him, by a question that he was the author of a false and scandalous report. But at last he named Mr. Methuen, and the words he told him were writ down. Mr. Methuen owned he had some private conversation with Mr. Montague at Kensington: and in answer to his questions, he told him what he had heard about letters writ to the Commissioners to advise their reporting the private estate, but denied that he had heard those letters contained the other expressions reflecting on the King; though he did tell Mr. Montague that those expressions were used by some of the Commissioners in their debate about this matter; and Mr. Montague misunderstood him, if he thought they were part of the letter, which he knew nothing of. This was likewise writ down; but the House did not concern themselves which of them was in the right, and still went on with their question, that the report

was false and scandalous, and left it in doubt to whom it belonged.

Then Mr. Harcourt proposed a question for vindicating the Commissioners, that the four who signed the report had discharged their trust with understanding and integrity. Nothing was then concluded upon it, the debate being adjourned till this day, upon a motion that the five Commissioners, who are in town, should first attend and clear the reports that had been spread of them.

Accordingly they were summoned, and Sir Richard Leving was first called in, his name having been made use of by Mr. Pulteney and my namesake, for several particulars he had said to them. He repeated them again at the bar, and by the account he gave, it appeared he had been the person who had informed Mr. Methuen, both of them using the same expressions. Then the rest of the Commissioners were called in, with their secretary, Sir Francis Brewster, and informed most of what Sir Richard Leving had said; and the other three Commissioners, as also their secretary, denied that any thing was said at their board reflecting on the King, and so cleared Mr. Hamilton, who was the person charged.

Mr. Annesley produced the letters he had received from Mr. Moore, Mr. Harcourt, and Sloen, but none of them mentioned the King; only Moore gave his opinion for reporting the private estate. In the conclusion, the vote of yesterday passed for vindi-

cating the four Commissioners, and another passed for charging Sir Richard Leving as the author of those false reports; and in consequence thereof he was sent to the Tower. Sir Francis Brewster was left out of this vote, as being an old man, that had not appeared forward to spread any of these reports.

Whether things will stop here, I know not; but the party is strong and violent, and some of them talk of impeaching those who have been instrumental in passing these grants, and yet the King still insists to have the thirds reserved, which I can see no good issue of.

The Lords have been upon the business of Darien; they have read the above mentioned address, with the orders that were sent to the Governors, and for further information, they will see the treaties with Spain, and the remarks of the Commissioners of Trade upon a Scotch memorial, in answer to that of the Spanish Ambassador's, which are to be brought them on Thursday; what they will conclude in, I suppose, will be an approval of what the King has done pursuant to their address.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 18, 1700.

We have had the Irish Bill read a second time to-day, and committed. The King being strangely bent upon having a clause for reserving one-third to

his own disposal, though every body that would make any judgment of the House, told him what would be the consequences of it. As it was agreed among us, I made the motion; Lord Ranelagh, Lord Coningsby, Mr. Smith, Mr. Boyle, and Ned Clark came into it; but we were pretty well rapped over the fingers, and some told us that these motions tended to laying aside the bill. Some great guns kept themselves in reserve for Mr. Montague; but he did not speak, judging right enough, that it would be to no purpose, and he had an item as if something were to be levelled at him after this question. The King expected we should have divided the House, but that would have been ridiculous, since hardly one would have gone out, besides those that argued for the clause.

When this was over, Mr. Howe said, they ought to take notice of those who had a hand in passing those grants, but he should do it in a gentle way. It came at last to two questions; the first was, that the advising, procuring, and passing the grants of forfeited and other estates in Ireland, had given the occasion to contract great debts upon the nation, and of laying heavy burthens upon the people. The other question was, that the advising and passing of the said grants was dishonourable to the King, and that the officers and the instruments concerned in it had failed in the performance of their duty. Both the questions passed without any contest; only afterwards Mr. Smith and Mr. Montague spoke something in their own vindication. The first seemed to

insinuate as if he had opposed most of the grants, and both of them made it understood that they had no more to answer for in these matters than my Lord Godolphin, Lord Lonsdale, Sir Edward Seymour, and Mr. Pelham, who sat at the board with them, though they did not name them. These late proceedings give the other party a great triumph, and the Whigs are miserably run down: at present, I don't see how they can recover it, but I wish the King and kingdom be not the greatest sufferers.

The Lords have been this day upon the Scotch business, and about five o'clock came to this resolution,—that the King's pleasure, signified to the Governors in the Plantations, in relation to the Scotch settlement at Darien, was agreeable to the address of both Houses of Parliament, dated 13th December, 1698.

Some lords are still for examining into the King of Spain's title to that tract of land, and have appointed it for Monday; but I suppose there is an end of it. I don't think we shall meddle with the address, as we intended, to-morrow; but the petition of the old East India Company will then come in for their being incorporated.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 20, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letters of the 17th and 18th inst., the last of which was brought

me this afternoon. I am sorry you find so little amendment; but if that is to be sought for abroad, I know not why you should defer it. In expectation of what is hatching at the gate-house, perhaps there may be no end of Smith and Kingston's scribbling one against the other; and I don't know, but they may be well enough matched, though one would not care to be the subject of either of their pens.

I saw my Lord Lucas yesterday, accidentally, who told me he had got 200*l.* for Dr. Kingston, from the King. He talked something as if Dr. Kingston had a mind to speak with me; but I told him, in civil terms, that might be inconvenient, since some already gave out as if the doctor pretended to be employed by your Grace. I don't know that Kingston gives an occasion for it; but some of Smith's partizans put it upon him.

The King went yesterday to Hampton Court, and returns this evening. I shall take the first opportunity to know whether he has thought of any person for groom-porter; but I am confident he will leave it to your disposal, if Neale's patent is not good in law; and I don't think any exception can be made to Mr. Rowley's being qualified for it.

We had yesterday the East India Company's petition, praying a bill might be brought in for their being a corporation. Sir Richard Onslow moved that the petition might lie on the table three or four days, that people might consider it, and examine the truth of the allegations. Mr. Montague took upon

him to say, that many of the allegations might be disapproved; but it was indifferent to him whether that matter was argued before the bringing in the bill or after, and seemed rather willing to stay till the bill was brought in, that the whole might come into debate together. So the question went for a bill.

We went to-day into the Committee of Supply. Mr. Harley, who governs in what relates to taxes, was for avoiding any disputes about the horse or foot, and proposed, as it was the last year, 300,000*l.* should be allowed for the guards and garrisons this next year; and reflections were made upon the exceeding that sum the last year; and, at the same time, it was declared that they should not concern themselves with the payment of any surplus beyond what they allotted. Their being put in mind that this surplus arises from maintaining a regiment in Guernsey and Jersey, and another in the West Indies, which were necessary in those places, and they had given no direction for disbanding them, signified nothing; but the question was carried, with a little opposition, for 300,000*l.*: only they resolved that half-pay should be allowed to the disbanded officers; but they will first examine whether some new commissions have not been granted in their wrong. The old East India Company will get no great advantage by the struggle they have been making; perhaps they may carry it for their being a corporation; but it was moved yesterday to go

into a committee, to consider of the East India trade and how to improve the manufactures of the kingdom. It is very probable that, in the conclusion, all wrought silks and calicoes from India may be prohibited, if it shall appear reasonable to be done. No favour or partiality will prevail in this House to the contrary.

The Lords have been these two days upon the bankers' case; they have only yet heard the council on both sides. They proceed to judgment on Monday, which is like to go for the bankers; but I don't know what good it will do them, since their fund is otherwise disposed of, by the Act that provides for the Civil List.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 23, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 20th, and am glad you have found so good an effect of your desperate remedy. When you are got out of this disaster, you will have time to consider whether it will be worth while to fall into it again.

I had an opportunity on Sunday night to lay before his Majesty your letter of the 18th. He asked me who Mr. Rowley was, and when I had given him his character, he bid me tell you he should not concern himself for any person, but freely left it to you, to make use of your own right.

The King wondered a little you should be in any concern about what Smith might be doing, which, he thinks, ought not to be of any consideration with you. I hope you now find yourself in such a way of recovery as not to think it necessary to go abroad, otherwise it is certain there is nothing that retains you. My Coventry man is not yet come to town; but I hear from another hand, that Smith is transcribing something for the press, in answer to Dr. Kingston, who, I suppose, will not fail to reply. I see no remedy, but they must be permitted to bespatter one another as long as they please, provided they do not throw dirt upon anybody else.

The House of Commons sat yesterday till five o'clock; a good deal of the time was taken up about Sloane's Borough of Thetford,—the merit of that election being now depending. A question has arisen, whether any of that corporation took the association within the time prescribed by the law; and, therefore, the cause is removed from the committee to be heard at the bar of the House on Friday next.

The House then went into a Committee of Trade. It looks as if some considerable regulations would be made in the East India trade, it being very calmly debated in the committee, without shewing any great regard to either company. I suppose, in the conclusion, neither of them will have much to value themselves upon their interest in the House.

At present, they are only making inquiries, to have wherewithal to ground their judgments on.

The Commissioners of Customs are to lay before them what silver has been exported since Michaelmas '97; as also what manufactured goods from India have either been imported, or exported again, within that time. They expect it will appear, notwithstanding Dr. Davenant's assertion, that the great consumption of East India goods is in England, to the ruin of our manufacturers; and that what is sent abroad is inconsiderable, and will not bring home the silver it carries out. They reckon that fifty ships have been sent to the East Indies since Michaelmas '97, either on account of the two companies, or by the interlopers. I believe some sorts of wrought goods will be prohibited, and others so high and effectually charged, that the trade will not be very valuable.

The Commons have been this day in a committee upon the Irish bill, and have gone through part of it; and sit again upon it on Monday next. There is no great attendance given to this committee, those who brought in the bill being left to model it as they think fit. Mr. Conyers was put into the chair. I suppose the meaning of it is, that it is to be sent to the Lords, as a money bill, and, perhaps, be tacked to the Land Tax, which will now be brought on, a Committee of Ways and Means being appointed on Thursday next.

The Lords heard the Judges' opinions yesterday in the bankers' case; the two Lord Chief Justices were long in their arguments, and of different opinions. The Lords gave judgment to-day in favour of the bankers, and have reversed my Lord Chancellor's reversal of the judgment of the Barons of the Exchequer. My Lord Chancellor is allowed to have argued very well, in maintenance of his opinion; but the Lords were near two to one for the reversal, and there was no need of dividing.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 25, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 22d. I hope now you are in a way of recovery you will go on with it to a cure. I know nobody wishes you so much ill, as to think of pressing you to come to town.

Dr. Kingston came to me yesterday morning, upon pretence of getting one of the Scotch books. I told him I would make him the same answer I did to my Lord Lucas, when he made me the same demand,—that I did not think it advisable he should write upon that subject; for when the Parliament had passed their censure on a book, and ordered it to be burnt, I thought it the best confutation of it; and, perhaps, such fault might be found in any thing that should be writ afterwards, as to cast the

blame on the other side. I gave him a hint, likewise, that for the same reason, if I had known his intention to write against Smith's last book, I should have dissuaded him from it, and rather since I foresaw the use to be made of it was, that in the next reply your Grace should be charged with having solicited him to write on that subject, or that it was done by your means and procurement. I thought it best to say thus much to him, that if they will scribble on, as I think there is no restraining them, he may make it understood that he does it of his own head. He still pretended as if some gentlemen had employed him to write. I would not ask him any questions about it, because I don't care for a bantering answer; and I would have him think I had seen his to your Grace, for the avoiding the engaging him in communications while this humour lasts.

However, I very much approved of his good intentions, and told him he had made good remarks on some points, and where he was short in others, it was because he wanted due information of facts. He told me Brown would have no more to do with Smith; and he heard the answer he was preparing was of Smith's own doing, which he would expose when it came out; and he would publish the names of those who contributed to Smith's maintenance; among others, he mentioned my Lord Stamford. I bid him have a care how he meddled with men of quality, who would be apt to call him to an account

for it, and then he might find himself in the case some others have been in, and not be able to produce his author, and being disowned or ill supported, the scandal must light upon himself. He thanked me for any caution; but I know not whether he is capable of advice, having, I perceive, a pique against my Lord Stamford, after the great intimacy they had together. I endeavoured to send him away in as good a humour as I could, without encouraging him to proceed. I very much feared the consequences of giving him any thing; and he telling me he had some relief from the King, there was no present need of it.

The Bill for incorporating the old East India Company was brought in yesterday, by Mr. Coke, of Derbyshire, and read the first time; though it was endeavoured to lay it on the table to be first considered. They have allowed time for that between the two readings; and that being put off for a week, the House then went into a Committee of Supply. They only voted another loan of 100,000*l.* for paying off seamen's wages. They intended making an establishment for sea pay, according to a state of it drawn up by the Lords of the Admiralty, which is by way of medium between the old pay in King Charles's time, and the double pay established in Council in '93. They have deferred doing it till they have a calculation from the Navy Board, to shew whether it will come within the 30*l.* per man already settled for wages.

We have been to-day in a Committee of Ways and Means, and have voted a land-tax, not exceeding 2*s.* in the pound; though Mr. Harley computed that the particulars already agreed to amounted to 1,300,000*l.*; but the surplus of the Civil List, and what they pretend to save by a better management of the Excise, is, in part, to supply the rest; and wherein it falls short, must be provided for next winter. They talk of doing something for the deficiencies; but what that is, does not yet appear, more than that Mr. Harley hinted as if the Irish forfeitures might be of some use that way. The officers, therefore, may be pretty much disappointed, who expect their whole arrears out of that fund.

The Lords have put off the consideration of the Scotch matters to Monday next, and have adjourned till then. The Princess miscarried last Tuesday night, of a male child; they say it had been dead in her a month. She, herself, seems to be in no danger.

Captain Kirk was tried this day, at the King's Bench, for the death of Conway Seymour. The jury found him guilty only of manslaughter; and Mr. Cage, his second, was acquitted.*

* After this letter follow two others, dated January 27th and 30th, 1700, solely concerning Smith and Dr. Fisher, with the exception of one short paragraph in the latter letter, which I have preserved. Smith still remained imprisoned, refusing to own his fault, and petition; but preparing an attack in return for Fisher's, and still aiming slander at the Duke of Shrewsbury.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 30, 1700.

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I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 27th. I hope you will have less melancholy thoughts now you have brought yourself once more into a way of recovery: whatever may have befallen some of your family, many more of them have been exempted from those weaknesses, and I am confident it is least of all to be apprehended in your Grace. You have been disquieted by pressing an employment upon you too soon, and now you make yourself uneasy by desiring too eagerly to get rid of it; but, as to the latter, one may very well content oneself with being in resigning temper, whenever the King has a mind to resume the staff. If, in the mean time, he thinks it for his service to let it lie where it is, I know not why that should create any impatience.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 3, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 31st. The chief thing we have done these two days in the House of Commons is, that yesterday the bill for prohibiting the exportation of corn this year was rejected; and to-day, a bill is allowed to be brought in for taking off the bounty money upon the expor-

tation of corn till Michaelmas next, which will, in some measure, restrain the exorbitancy of exporting.

We had the report this day of the election of Bishops Castle, in Shropshire. The sitting member, Sir Wm. Brownlow, and the petitioner, Sir Gilbert Gerrard, were both discarded for bribery; and Mason, against whom was no petition, hardly escaped a censure, for being a tool under my Lord Macclesfield; and his kinsman, Sir Edward Seymour moved to have it referred to the committee, to inquire how far Mason was guilty of bribery; and it was dropt only that it might not be a precedent for bringing more acceptable men in question, when they are mentioned in evidence by bribery.

Some people shew an inclination to fall upon my Lord Orford, in a more sensible part than that of the Dolphin frigate. Colonel Byerley put the House in mind, yesterday, of several particulars they formed into an address last session, for regulating miscarriages in the navy; one of which was, that the deductions upon slop clothes, tobacco, &c., furnished to seamen on shipboard, ought to be accounted for. He supposed, therefore, that those accounts were ready, and moved that the Commissioners of the Navy should lay them before the House, going back as far as February 13, 1689. Some say they will apply it to the public, and put it into their money bill. If they do so, it will be a sensible mortification, both to my Lord Orford and Dorrington.*

* So written here; but I suspect it should be Doddington.

Mr. Montague moved they might have the like accounts from the time the Treasurers of the Navy had salaries appointed them, in lieu of perquisites, which is ordered, but will not be equally exacted.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 6, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 3rd, and have read the first paragraph of it to the King, wherein you argue about your resigning; all his Majesty said was, that whatever your intentions might be hereafter, this would be a very improper time for your quitting. I will not put myself among the guessers, for I can make no judgment of what we are to expect. Those who have an ill-will to my Lord Chancellor, seem to pursue it still; they would fain gather a strength to carry an address against him, but I believe they are apprehensive of miscarrying in it. They have waited for Mr. How's coming to town, who appeared in the House this morning. He has no personal dislike to my Lord Chancellor, but the applause he has from his party will lead him in any thing they are fond of. My Lord Chancellor is desirous that they would come out with any thing they have to object against him, and thinks it much the most uneasy condition to have their accusations kept in suspense. I know not what his resolutions are, if matters are to be left in this uncertainty;

some say he will rather resign, than be always thus exposed; and others say he will not gratify his enemies so far. If this last be his resolution, I should most approve of it, and think it best becoming a man of integrity.

The Coventry man has been with Smith again, who tells him his book is finished, and gone to the press, which I likewise heard from another hand; he mentions only having exposed Dr. Kingston, but I believe he has grown into some jealousy of this person. He asked him when Major Beak would be in town; and he telling him he was fallen ill, Smith said to this man, he knowing Mr. Hopkins very well, he might do the business; and repeated again that he would make a notable discovery if he was assured of a maintenance and protection; and he would make any submission to your Grace; but if Mr. Hopkins transacted any thing with him, he must be assured that he had an authority from your Grace, or from me. At his desire, the man told him he would speak to Mr. Hopkins; who has returned him an answer that he knows nothing of the business, and therefore thinks himself improper to meddle in it. Smith told him he must have Mr. Hopkins's answer by Thursday next, from whence I conclude his book is to come out towards the latter end of next week; and he is playing the same game he did lately, when his book was writ for him and in the press. He brings my Lord Jersey a manuscript copy of it, and afterwards a printed copy, to shew it

to the King, and made himself understood that it should be suppressed if the King pleased; that is, if he and his authors might have what they would ask: which is a snare nobody would run into with such treacherous people.

He talked likewise of his Scarlet History, which he should now think of finishing; that he was hitherto diverted from it by Kingston's book. This man asked him how long he thought of staying in the gate-house; he said that depended on the pleasure of those who supported him there; that they kept him, indeed, very plentifully, but it was in jail. He would never make the least mention who they were.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 8, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 5th, with a second letter from Brown. I shall keep them together, to be produced as there shall be occasion; but I perceive he is a *cast-off*, and thinks to go round again with his old keepers; but that, one may consider at leisure. If Dr. Chamberlain was suborning him, I hear it was at a cheap rate; for Brown has complained that he allowed him but six shillings and sixpence per week.

Mr. How began to open himself yesterday, and moved for a day to consider the state of the nation, which is appointed on Tuesday next;—there was a

long debate whether it should be in a committee, or in the House. We moved for the regular way of doing it in a committee, since, upon those subjects, people ought to have a liberty to speak more than once; but they were for doing it in the House, pretending to save time, since, otherwise, it would take up the whole day in reading the papers that must be referred to that committee. They carried the question upon a division, by 162 against 155; which is no very encouraging majority on their side.

They say the reason why they strove against going into a committee was, that they might bring up Kidd's business again, and would make it regular, since it has not yet had any determination in the House. If this be their intention, one would think they wanted matter against my Lord Chancellor, and therefore trump this up once more; and if it fails them again, perhaps they may let him alone, though they are more set against him than any one else. They talk of examinations about the Dolphin frigate, and how the Irish grants came to be passed. They throw out terrors of impeachments, but would be glad to carry an address. There was another motion made the same day, by Mr. Hammond, for appointing a committee to inquire how far the laws have been put in execution against Papists; to which was added a direction to inspect the said laws, and to report their opinion of them; as also to propose what further remedies were necessary for suppressing the growth of Popery, and strengthening the

Protestant religion. The design of the motion was to charge the government with remissness; and that, by the carelessness of the administration, the kingdom swarmed with priests. But, on the other side, it was shewn, that the great severity of the laws hindered the execution of them; that putting people to death merely for their religion was generally condemned by Protestants, and disliked by Englishmen; and if the sanguinary laws were changed into other punishments, they would have more effect; and the House seemed to be very much of this opinion. And I hope they may find out ways to be rid of priests, and to breed up the children of Papists in the Protestant religion.

Mr. Montague thought this a proper occasion to be revenged on Mr. Methuen, and said it might be worth their inquiry whether one bred at St. Omer was fit to be the King's envoy in Portugal. This was received with laughter; but Mr. Methuen, who came not into the House till after the jest was made, replied to it, that considering what had so lately happened,* he thought that gentleman would not so soon assert things in that House which were without ground; for in this case his son never was at St. Omer. He had sent him into France for his health, in King Charles's time, at the age of eight years, and he stayed till he was eleven years old; during a part of that time he went to school to the Jesuits'

* In regard to the silly and imprudent speech made by Montague, respecting the Commissioners of Irish grants.

College at Paris, whither several French Protestants sent their sons; and mentioned the proofs he had given since of his steady adhering to the Protestant religion.

Mr. How turned the ridicule the other way, saying, that if there were such a Popish envoy in Portugal, he must certainly have been sent thither since Saturday fortnight (which was the day Mr. Montague and Mr. Methuen began to differ), for if he had been longer there, a privy councillor and a minister would not have failed to acquaint the King with it, and have pressed his being recalled.

It would be better that people in the King's business should forbear their reflections upon one another in public, which expose themselves and others in like stations.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 13, 1700.

The House sat so very long to-day, that I must refer you to a copy of an account I am sending to the King, of this day's debate; which, I hope, will be as pleasing to him as it is to my Lord Chancellor's friends. I hope his adversaries will let him alone hereafter, since they got no more ground upon him.

I wish, likewise, it may satisfy him that there has been no underhand dealing by any one who are in

the King's business. Some think I did my endeavours, according to my weak talent. There has been a great jealousy, as well of my Lord Marlborough as of my Lord Sunderland, though I know no ground for it; and 'tis suspected that Mr. Harley fell upon my Lord Jersey, as one my Lord Sunderland has no great kindness for.

Mr. How is got into the chair of the Committee against Popery; but I find their business is to look for reflections upon remissness, and not care for the expedients that would remedy the mischief.

We press for condemning priests to perpetual imprisonment in some remote part, instead of putting them to death, but shall hardly obtain it; these gentlemen upholding the sanguinary laws, because they know they will not be executed.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 15, 1700.

We sat this evening much later than we did on Tuesday. The inclosed will inform your Grace what has passed. Perhaps we might have carried the last question if it had been more laboured; but Sir Christopher Musgrave, and some others, answering with warmth to Mr. Boyle, who would have diverted the question, we chose rather to let it go than to put it to a hazard, or encourage them by a majority to proceed to more personal matters.

We had success yesterday upon the Prince of Denmark's debt. They have voted a supply towards paying his Majesty a portion; but what that is, is not yet declared, nor when or how it shall be paid. It is probable they will charge themselves with one moiety, and upon the report to-day have voted an address to his Majesty, that he will endeavour with the States and Princes abroad, that they may pay their proportion of the debt; and some talk as if they would expect the success before they pay their money; and when they do it, it is to be laid out in land, to be settled, as the Danish lands were, upon the issue of the Prince and Princess.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 16, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 14th. I send you inclosed Smith's book, which, I suppose, is published to-day; it came to me from one who promised I should have of the first of them. I have just cast my eye over it, and see what use he makes of his lying in prison. I find nothing one should be much concerned at; so that Kingston and he may be left to decide their quarrel among themselves. One may believe my Lord Peterborough has not been much concerned in this piece. I suppose he has his head filled with another project,

which is to carry on a bill for the Duke of Norfolk's divorce, though he formerly threw it out. He has got the bill read the first time in the House of Lords; and before the second reading, the Duchess is to give her objections to it, why it should not proceed. Some say my Lord Peterborough is so busy in this matter, upon an expectation that the Duke will marry his daughter; and, perhaps, it may be to oblige the Duchess to settle Drayton upon him, and then he will change sides again. He has sent me another message by a second hand, that if he could speak with me, he had something to tell me that was for the King's service, and might be of use to me. I have made a civil doubtful answer; but if it be pressed upon me, I know not what to do, for of all men living, I can the least confide in him.

We have been quiet these two days in the House of Commons. We were, yesterday, in a Committee of Ways and Means, where Mr. Harley proposed that the Irish lands should be applied, not only to the paying of the arrears of the army and the transport debts, but likewise to the malt tickets, and other deficient tallys, if the owners of them will exchange them for land; the price whereof, he thinks, will rise by the competition. And this has been approved of to-day; as also that there be a further duty laid on East India wrought goods, to continue till the prohibition takes place, which will be to Michaelmas come twelvemonth. Perhaps they imagined then the Lords would not pass the Prohibition Bill; but

it has happened otherwise, for they have this day agreed to it without any amendment.

Since the disappointments in the two days, when the state of the nation was considered, the bill against offices, that had lain asleep, was called for; and this day we have been in a committee upon it. It was at first drawn that nobody should be capable of being elected a Member of Parliament, who had any office whatsoever, without any exception; but Sir Edward Hussey, who had formerly brought in two bills, declaring that no man should accept of an office after he was chosen, stuck to his old notions, and proposed it as an amendment, instead of the utter incapacity, which Sir Christopher Musgrave joined in; and the whole frame of the bill was altered accordingly, to the amazement of those who were for turning all men in places out of the House: at least, they were to come no more into parliament. Mr. How happened to be out of the House when the amendment was made, and coming in afterwards, told them they had made a jest of their self-denying ordinance; and so it will be thought, if they stick to it upon the report. I left the House in a Committee upon the Irish bill, which, I suppose, they have gone through with.

The King went to Hampton Court yesterday, and returns not till this evening. He has not yet been acquainted with the desires of the House about attending him with an address resolved on upon Thursday; but he thinks he was most hardly dealt

with that day, by coming to him upon so disagreeable an errand.

I find there are as great jealousies of my Lord Sunderland as ever, which my Lord Marlborough and Lord Godolphin are involved in. I now imagine the foresight my Lord Marlborough had of them, made him wish my Lord Sunderland should shorten his stay here. He once designed going away this week, but he talks no more of it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 20, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 17th. I don't know to what degree there has been a coldness between Lord Sunderland and Lord Jersey, but I believe there has been something of it; and yet it may alter again, for one sees nothing else between men of intrigue, but shifting from point to point.

There has been a talk of making Robin Harley Secretary of State. I don't know whether he would accept of it; but if he were so inclined, I could be contented to resign to him upon an easy composition, for I find myself the unfittest man in the world for mysterious managements.

My Lord Chancellor has been pleased to make me a compliment upon what passed on Tuesday last;

but he still apprehends the restlessness of a party, who think 182 a sufficient number to make any one uneasy. He hears they will have another debate upon the report from the committee appointed to consider of the commissions of peace, and will single out the alterations made in the justices for Suffolk; which was done upon the representations made by the late Lord Cornwallis, who made so great a change at one time, that my Lord Chancellor says he and your Grace, and Sir John Trenchard, took notice of it, and abated something of my Lord Cornwallis's heat in that matter.

We have done very little in the House of Commons these two days. The Speaker came ill thither yesterday, with a fit of the stone or gravel. In compassion to him, the House resolved itself very soon into a Committee to consider of the Land Tax Bill; and having made some little progress in it, the Speaker resumed the chair only to adjourn the House till to-morrow. If he be well enough, we are to attend the King to-morrow with the address resolved on upon Thursday, about the advisers and promoters of the Irish grants.

The Speaker is a little better to-day, but it is a doubt whether he will be well enough to-morrow to go on with the business. If he should come only to the House to adjourn again, I don't know how such delays will be borne, or whether they will admit of such a Speaker, *pro tempore*, as shall be willing to resign when Sir Thomas recovers strength; at least

it is suspected they will propose Mr. Harcourt, or Mr. Conyers; and if either of them be put into the chair, he will be kept there.

The Lords have been busy these two days. Yesterday, they heard counsel about the bill for incorporating the old East India Company. They have committed it, and intend to proceed upon it on Friday next. They have allowed so much time to see what proposal will be made by the New Company for an accommodation, who instructed their counsel to express the desires they had of uniting, and that they would readily submit the terms to the judgment of the Lords. I am afraid this expedient will avail little; they talk as if an accommodation could not be practicable till the bill were past. I think the New Company have little prospect, likewise, that the Lords will admit of their saving clause, though there is a great appearance of justice on that side; but the tide runs strong one way.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Feb. 22, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 19th, and shall send the inclosed to-morrow to Mr. Cresset, to whom I write almost every post.

I have heard nothing further from Lord Peter-

borough. I hope he is so fully employed about the Duke of Norfolk's* business, that he will have nothing else in his head.

The Coventry man has been lately with Smith, who, I believe, suspects him to be more Mr. Hopkins's friend than his, and talks to him accordingly. He tells him he designs to write either to your Grace or to me, and he would be willing all that is past should be forgot. If he makes his application to me, my answer shall be, that he is in the hands of the House of Lords, (without my bringing him thither), and I should not concern myself with any of their prisoners.

Perhaps those who have supported him hitherto are growing weary of him, and would drop him, as they have done Brown, who sends me word the six shillings and sixpence allowed him by Dr. Chamberlain is stopped, and if I don't relieve him he must starve; and now he would lay it upon my Lord Chief Justice, as if Chamberlain had been his tool. I am not sorry to see such rogues in a condition as not to know which way to turn themselves. I think it is best to leave them there, that they may be deceived

* The Duke of Norfolk had married Lady Mary Mordant, near kinswoman of the Earl of Peterborough. She had long lived separate from the Duke, and he had more than once attempted to obtain a divorce, in which he had failed, and had been constantly opposed therein by the Earl, who now, it would seem, in revenge of the Duchess having proved his participation in the papers sent to Sir John Fenwick, moved heaven and earth to convict her of adultery.

in their vanity, when they think they may play the fool and the knave with all mankind by turns, and over and over again.

Sir Thomas Littleton came to the House yesterday: he was a little eased of the gravel, but had something of a fever upon him. The House, for his ease, went into a Committee of Ways and Means till three o'clock, and when he resumed the chair, Mr. Harley very civilly desired to know of him when he thought he should be in better condition to attend the service of the House, which others approving of, he gave them thanks for the consideration they had of him, and if they pleased to spare him till Thursday, he hoped he should be well by that time, or otherwise, he would trespass no longer on their patience. So that, after having disposed of their depending orders to other days in the next week, the House adjourned till Monday, on which day they will go into a committee to consider the state of the revenue. It is generally said they will fall upon the mismanagement of the Excise, and drive at putting it into a farm. They think elections are more influenced by those officers than any others, and they would mortify Ned Clark, as a friend of my Lord Chancellor's. I don't know but this is the only angry point we are to struggle with this session, and when it is over we shall hasten to a conclusion.

The Speaker made shift to get to Kensington in a chair, and presented the two resolutions of the 18th of January in an address, being attended by all

the grandees that voted it, particularly Sir Edward Seymour, Sir Christopher Musgrave, and Mr. Harley. The King's answer was:—

"That he was not only led by inclination, but thought himself obliged in justice, to reward those who had served well, and particularly in the reduction of Ireland, out of the estates forfeited to him by the rebellion there. The long war in which we were engaged did occasion great taxes, and had left the nation much in debt; and the taking just and effectual ways for the lessening of that debt, and supporting public credit, was, in his opinion, what would best contribute to the honour, interest, and security of the kingdom."

This answer cannot be reported till Monday.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Feb. 24, 1700.

I happened to have a long conference this morning with the Earl of Peterborough; but it was not a private one. As I came from seeing my Lord Jersey, I was no sooner got into my chair, but my Lord Peterborough came by in another chair, and stopped before my Lord Jersey's door, telling me he would take that opportunity of speaking with me, and kept me there, *tète-à-tète*, near one hour, in the view of all persons that passed by.

He began with Brown, and in great ramble he

talked that he should be obliged to bring that matter upon the stage, to shew what practices there had been against him; and he was very angry with my Lord Chancellor for putting off the meeting. He expected of the Archbishop and Lord President to re-examine the affair of Brown; he thought his Lordship would have vouchsafed him an answer in two or three months' time, but he put him off by pretending the delay was from the other Lords. When I could thrust in a word, I told him I could say nothing to that meeting, not having heard of it before; but as to Brown, I had kept the promise I had made him last summer, that I would have no more to do with him, and if others had minded him no more than I had done, we should have been rid of him long ago; that he had been trying to make his applications again to me upon Dr. Chamberlain's abandoning him, and stopping the six shillings and sixpence a week, which he said was done upon his refusing to swear to a paper that was drawn up for him; but I slighted any thing he had to say, and would not suffer him to pin himself upon me any more. I thought that whoever consulted his own quiet, would do well to discard such fellows.

He told me Brown did not come near him, and perhaps that is true; he added, that if Chamberlain had given him any thing it was of his own hand; but that nobody will believe. He owned he had Brown's book, which was ready for the press, and Chamberlain would have had it delivered back to him, but

that he refused. He talked something, likewise, about Smith, and swore a great many oaths that he had no hand in writing the book for which he is in the gate-house, nor knew nothing of the author till a month or six weeks after it was published. I expostulated with him how he came to set himself in enmity against your Grace, and to single you out for all his attacks, who, I was sure, had never deserved any ill-treatment from him. He asked upon whose account he was put in the Tower. I told him my Lord Marlborough and my Lord Godolphin were aimed at by Sir John Fenwick's papers, as well as your Grace, but every body had quarter given them except yourself, who had never done an ill-natured thing to any body, much less to him.

He talked as if it would be fit your Grace should interpose to bring Smith out of prison, (from whence he would not petition to be released); he would have your Grace write to the House of Lords to intercede with them, that this man might not suffer from any misbehaviour towards you, and since he had some pretence of being serviceable to the public, that he should be released; and he would have something said in the same letter about himself, as if he had done but what became him upon the informations Smith had given him. I told him I did not think him in earnest when he made such proposals; I would as soon advise your Grace to submit to his shooting you through the head as to the doing any thing so mean; there were honourable

ways left for people being reconciled, and I was sure you would take no other.

He run into discourse, likewise, about the Duchess of Norfolk, and shews great pleasure in taking his revenge. When he mentioned he had other things in reserve against those that chose to be his enemies, I told him, smilingly, that he was better acquainted with Sir James Montgomery than your Grace was. He answered, it was no matter for that; nothing had passed between them which he had not acquainted the King with. People coming to my Lord Jersey's, broke up the conversation; and I think we parted with less chagrin than he shewed at the beginning. He said something as if we must have a further discourse.

The King dined yesterday with my Lord Bradford, it being his birthday, and entrance upon the eighty-first year of his age. My Lord Sunderland was one of the company. The King went that evening to Hampton Court, and comes back to-night.

Sir Thomas Littleton is pretty well again, so that we shall not need a new Speaker. They give out that they will find fault with the King's answer to the address when it is reported on Monday; the short construction put upon it is, that the King tells them the forfeitures are his to dispose of, and the debts are theirs to pay.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 27, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 24th. I did imagine it would come into your Grace's thoughts that my Lord Jersey might be accommodated with your Staff. Perhaps, too, my Lord Jersey would like that employment better than his own, which he is pretty weary of; but I question whether there will be any occasion for vacancies on Mr. Harley's account. My Lord Sunderland tells me, he still believes him averse to the meddling with any employment. I don't know whether this stiffness may not arise from his being irreconcileable with this ministry, though I hear Mr. Montague has talked of late as if he wished he were in employment; and this change towards him springs from the moderation Mr. Harley shewed on Thursday se'nnight, when Mr. Montague was called upon to withdraw, and Mr. Harley advised looking forward for future amendments; which provoked Coke of Derby to go out of the House, and to say he would never trust a Presbyterian rogue more. But I think one may be mistaken in the kindnesses of that day, when it was so long doubtful whether any thing could be carried.

I am obliged to your Grace for the good advice you give me as to my own conduct, which I will endeavour to put in practice more than I have done.

I find the treating of members is an endless work, and it is like to offend many more than it obliges.

I have some remembrance of this Lamberty, that writes to your Grace from the Hague. He waited on you sometimes when you first came to be Secretary. I think Blancard and he did not agree, which made my Lord Portland jealous of him; and I don't know whether he was not sent away. He was a fresh coloured man, about thirty or forty, who had a small impediment in his speech.

Some poor refugee has been translating Smith's book, in hopes to get a penny by it, though it is a very unlucky piece to turn to their account. I intend to get Monsr. Bourdieu to inquire who this Bourneck and Frieback are; for at the Hague I perceive they have no knowledge of these worthy translators. I see no use of getting the copy from thence, for these authors can soon furnish themselves with another, if they have occasion for it.

I was with my Lord Chancellor yesterday, and told him of my street conversation with the Earl of Peterborough, as well as in relation to him as to your Grace. He told me he was aware that my Lord Peterborough lay in wait to shew him a mark of his kindness, he having told one in confidence, that my Lord Chancellor stood in his way against his being revenged on your Grace and my Lord Orford; that he could not bear your having the White Staff, and though my Lord Orford were out of employment, yet he must be brought lower, and it

must not be deferred, since, otherwise, he would come in again; these Commissioners of the Admiralty being such tools, that they could not keep him long out. My Lord Chancellor added, that though the Earl of Peterborough was a very ill man, yet there were others as bad as he. This he spoke in relation to himself, and that he could give a strange account of very barbarous contrivances against him. I imagine he meant my Lord Sunderland for one, though I never heard that lord speak otherwise of my Lord Chancellor than with great esteem for his abilities; and for my Lord Peterborough, he told me he had not seen him for a month.

If people have dark sides, I don't know but they may put the greatest deceit upon themselves. My Lord Chancellor seemed very weary of continuing under these agitations, and said people could not be more desirous of his quitting, than he was to gratify them in it. So that I doubt whether he has resolution enough to bear up against this constant baiting; and what happened yesterday, perhaps, he may like no more than the rest, when they fell upon the King's speech, and those they thought the advisers of it.

When the Speaker (who is pretty well recovered again) reported the King's answer, there was a silence for some time. Mr. How made a very short speech, as doubting whether he should be supported or not, and desired to be satisfied whether he was to be the cat's-foot that day, before he would proceed. Then Sir Christopher Musgrave, after another pause,

took exception at the answer, as not being in the usual manner, and that it rather reflected on their proceedings; but what he said was in moderate terms, and Mr. Harley, who spoke after him, rather did it by way of reply to my Lord Coningsby, and in a bantering manner, and left it to others to declare what opinion the House ought to have of this answer. Then Mr. How went on to dissect it; and having acquitted the King, as Sir Christopher Musgrave did, and laying it upon his evil counsellors, he concluded with a question, that whoever advised his Majesty's answer to their address, was an enemy to the King and the kingdom.

Sir Christopher Musgrave said he was not for going so high; but yet he went very little lower, and turned it, that whoever was the adviser, he had used his utmost endeavours to create a misunderstanding and jealousy betwixt the King and his people. I know not how it came to pass, but this question was very little opposed. Mr. Montague and Mr. Smith said nothing to it. Perhaps, as the humour runs, they think there is little danger in generals; and, for the same reason, there was no forwardness to divide the House, when the Speaker had declared the question was carried in the affirmative, though the cry was pretty equal. It is pretty certain, when these gentlemen find they have a majority, they are apt to push it, and drive on to personal votes.

The House refused that day the leave that some

lawyers asked to go the circuit; and that none should pretend to it, they made a general order, that none should have leave granted to them till after the next general call of the House, which is appointed this day se'nnight. The reason given for it is, that a bill is expected from the Lords, concerning an unicn with Scotland; which, they say, has been brought into the House of Lords by a side-wind, and is of so great consequence, that whenever it is brought to us, it ought to lie upon the table till all the members have been sent for up. Perhaps this may be the issue of that bill; and I wish they have not other reasons for keeping their party together.

We were in a committee this day upon the state of the revenue. Mr. Harley opened the general scheme of the revenue with the consequence it was to the Members of that House to have a right understanding of it, and concluded with a particular account of the Excise, which he shewed had increased for six years successively before the revolution, which he imputed to the good management of the then commissioners; and the said revenue having proportionably decreased ever since, he desired that those who were entrusted with that management should give the reason of it. Mr. Clark gave an answer to it, and shewed that during the six years before the revolution, there was no higher a duty of excise than two shillings and sixpence per barrel upon ale, and sixpence upon beer; besides those were times of peace and plenty, and the Jus-

tices of the peace were obliged to give all encouragement to the excisemen, and great care was taken that the retailer made full measure. The reason why so many barrels had not been brewed since, he alleged, was raising the duty to six shillings for ale, and eighteen-pence for beer, which forced people upon private brewings, adding to the people being impoverished by the war, and the victuallers being burthened with quartering soldiers. The number of public-houses is decreased 13,000; the malt duty was a further lessening of the revenue, especially barley being so dear at the same time, and there being occasion to make bread of it for the poor; and further, the brewers have fraudulently set to brewing ale at 3*l.* per barrel, which they mix afterwards with small beer, and make three barrels of strong drink, when they pay the duty but for one; and if it be not so mixed, the drink is sold out in less than half the measure, all which ways have contributed to the sinking the excise; but it was visible it began to rise again, and would daily increase since taking off the malt duty.

Mr. Harley was about refuting these reasons, when an alarm was given of a kind of tumult in Westminster Hall, and upon the parliament stairs, of men and women that threatened Mr. Harley by name, for putting off the bill about taking soldiers' accounts, which was appointed for that day.

Upon this the justices of the peace were sent for, with the constables, who dispersed the rabble, and

one man was seized who had encouraged the disbanded soldiers to come next with their arms, and kill the first parliament man they met. He is committed to the gate-house, and is ordered to be prosecuted.

This tumult, and the making orders against solicitors, who are the inciters of this rabble, took up the day, and to-morrow we shall proceed in the same committee.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Feb. 29, 1700.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 26th. If Lord Peterborough could have made any mischievous use of Brown or his papers, he would have done it long before now; but 'tis that matter confounds him, and he would fain get some justification of himself by a meeting of the Archbishop, Lord Chancellor, and Lord President, that he may be a little more at liberty to play his pranks, which I have given my Lord Chancellor a caution of, and hope they will keep this matter hanging just as it is, till there be some security against this man's malice.

I think your Grace is much in the right to wish yourself out of so unreasonable a persecution, and for quiet's sake, to be reconciled even with this madman. Now I know your mind, I will not let any opportunity slip that I can make use of, though I

know I have a terrible and faithless creature to deal with: the worst of it is, he has a greediness equal to his malice, and without satisfying one there is no appeasing the other. He wants money, and would leap at it; but he has no moderation in any thing, and I question whether the King would be willing to satisfy his cravings. I believe I shall hear from him one way or another, and then I will see what he would be at.

I have sent to speak with Monsieur Bourdieu, but he is not yet come to me.

We were upon the business of the excise again yesterday, and now their intentions of farming the excise begin to discover themselves. It did not appear to me that they made it well out when they would have charged mismanagement upon the Commissioners of Excise, but even they agreed that there was a decay in that revenue, which they assigned to the causes mentioned in my last. Sir Christopher Musgrave's question, therefore, was easily assented to, that there was a decay; and it was not opposed, when Mr. Harley made it stronger, and called it a loss to the prejudice of the public; but Sir Edward Seymour's addition was not admitted,—that it came by the mismanagement of the present Commissioners.

When that question was passed, Mr. Harley proposed another,—that the House be moved to consider of methods for the improvement of that revenue, which is appointed to-morrow, nobody opposing it.

In all their debates they hinted at a *farm*, which found no great reception; and Mr. Hopkins, of Coventry, spoke against it as the greatest oppression they could bring on the subject. I hardly think such a project will go down with the House. I have been told they have been trying to bring Duncomb and Dashwood into it, but neither of them have any great mind to it. I shall think them much in the right to refuse it. The usage of the New East India Company should be a warning how people advance their money upon parliamentary proposals.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 2, 1700.

I send your Grace Dr. Kingston's answer to Smith's book; perhaps you have it from the author himself. It is a piece of scurrility that is only fit for the parties concerned. We were yesterday upon the consideration of improving the Excise. Mr. Harley proposed the question, that it be our instruction to the Committee to whom the Land Tax Bill is referred, that they receive a clause to empower his Majesty to farm the Excise, if he shall think fit. Mr. Lowndes laid it open, what the difference was like to be between a farm and a management of Commissioners, which last have always made the greatest improvement of that revenue; that I don't think there will be a farm, though it is allowed of; but another

question followed, which, perhaps, was principally aimed at. It was moved by Ned Harley, that it should be provided for in the said clause, that no Member of the House should be concerned either in farming or managing the Excise. As to managing, he afterwards explained himself, that no member should be a Commissioner of the Excise, or hold any office belonging to the Excise. Perhaps, when the clause is brought in, they will add the like exclusion of the officers of the Customs; the reason will hold in the same, that being obliged to attend the service of the House, they cannot so well discharge the duties in their offices; and all branches of the Revenue would increase in the hands of diligent and skilful officers.

What clauses of this nature they put into the Money Bill, they make sure of carrying; whereas they suspect an effectual bill against offices, will not pass beyond the House.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 7, 1700.

There has been but little done these two days in the House. A debate about Bonelace took up yesterday.

To-day, the Committee have gone through the Bill against Popery; and it will be a pretty effectual one. Priests are to undergo perpetual imprison-

ment; and those who attain the age of eighteen, cannot inherit any estate fallen to them, if they do not take the oaths and sign the declaration within six months; but the estate must go to the next Protestant of the kindred, who is to hold it without account; but the person may recover his estate again by taking the oaths.

We have had the rewarding of the Irish Commissioners under consideration; 1,000*l.* each is given to five of them. But Sir Francis Brewster, Sir Richard Levinge have only 500*l.* a piece, with this further distinction, that the 500*l.* is given to them in consideration of their expences; and to the five, for the good services performed by them.

It was endeavoured to put the four into a question by themselves, and to leave my Lord Drogheda to shift with the other two; but it was carried to put the question upon each name, and my Lord Drogheda was first proposed, and had his reward of a 1,000*l.* without difficulty. The Secretary, Mr. Hooper, has the same reward with the five.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 23, 1700.

We had a tedious work yesterday, about the Irish Bill, which lasted till nine at night. We got so far as to make an amendment in the body of the bill, which precludes all clauses from being received.

There was only one favourable clause passed, for preserving the grant made to Sir Charles Porter's children; though it was opposed, and there were three divisions for it. Mr. How was for the clause; which occasioned severe repartees between him and Sir Christopher Musgrave. Mr. How was called a proselyte, for altering his first notions about the bill, and promoting grants to be made by the House when it is taken from the Crown, to whom it more properly belonged. He taxed others with being new courtiers; and that there was a party who pretended to govern the House, but they would find themselves mistaken.

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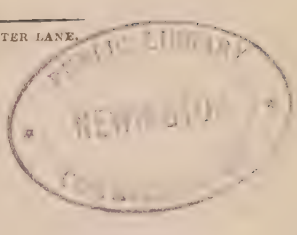
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